



THE EUCCHARISTIC LETTER

Jean-Pierre Medaille, SJ
Le Puy, 1660

REVISITED... WITH COMMENTARY

by the Little Design Core Community
Ottawa, Canada. 2011.

Eucharistic Letter

For our reflections here in this binder, we have divided The Eucharistic Letter into 42 paragraphs.

- We will provide a one page commentary on each of the 42 paragraphs.
- Also, I plan to post one paragraph of The Eucharistic Letter with commentary **online** at our Little Design website weekly. All members (and viewers) around the world are invited to add their responses to the weekly Reflection Question. Let's keep it interactive and inspiring!
- At your own at-home meetings, you can use these paragraphs for your personal and communal study and spiritual sharing. Take your time and move along at your own pace. Come back to the website and contribute your comments and insights.
- As you will see from our **Gatherings Section**, we have divided the whole EUCHARISTIC LETTER into 8 study sections. You might need a couple years to pace yourself through these commentaries. Enjoy wonderful conversations!

THE EUCHARISTIC LETTER

JESUS MARY JOSEPH

FEELING AND UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THE DESIGN

Vision and essence of the Little Design

1. May I share with you the humble thoughts which the Saviour in his measureless goodness has deigned to communicate to me concerning his design. He has revealed to me a perfect model of this little design in the Holy Eucharist – the Eucharist which is the source of all our pure and holy loves on earth.

2. Jesus, in the Eucharist, my dear *sisters and brothers*,* is entirely empty of self. And ought not we also, in accordance with his will, strive to establish an Institute totally empty of self? Yes, my dear *sisters and brothers*,* our cherished association is to be a body without a body, and if I dare say it, a congregation without a congregation, and perhaps in time a religious order without being a religious order. In a word, it will never appear to be anything in the world, and it will be in the eyes of God whatever he, himself, in his infinite mercy is pleased to make of his Institute.

3. It seems to me, my dear *sisters and brothers*,* that I envision our association – which in reality is nothing – established in a great number of places, and yet established in such a hidden way that only the persons who compose it, will know about it. God grant that it may be established throughout the whole Church.

4. It will be, with God's help, invisible, as Jesus in the adorable Eucharist is a God who is hidden, totally invisible. Moreover, it will be very little, both in its own eyes and in reality, just as Jesus reduces himself in the smallest particle of bread and wine.

5. O God, how happy our little Institute will be if it maintains this spirit of littleness, humility, and self-emptying detachment, and a life hidden for all time, and if God wills it, even for eternity.

A real nothingness

6. Now what I find so marvellous in this new design is that it is without a visible father or mother, founder or foundress, without a house of its own. In a word, I see it stripped of everything.

7. However, through the goodness of God, it will have all of these to a greater degree. Its father and its mother, its founder and foundress, will be Jesus and Mary, invisible to the eyes of the body but clearly visible to the eyes of the spirit.

8. As for our part in it, my dear *sisters and brothers*,* that amounts to nothing but a hindrance to his work.

9. Accordingly, let us look at Jesus in the Holy Eucharist completely stripped of everything. We give him adornments and we take them away at will. He accepts them or lets them go without any resistance. And yet he is his own Author, his own Father, so to speak – as he is ours – and the priest at the consecration is no more than the instrument of his power.

10. O what a parallel between our real nothingness and the self-emptying of the dear Saviour in his divine Sacrament! What a condescension that for so great a mystery, he makes use of a priest, a frail and often sinful man! What condescension that he should make use of us for our little Institute!

Living the evangelical counsels

11. In the second place, in the most holy Eucharist we have a perfect model of the poverty, chastity and obedience of our little Institute.

12. Is there anything so poor in the world as this great Saviour who hides himself, not only under the reality of a piece of bread, but under its form and appearance, in an impoverishment and diminishment so great that a mere fragment of what seems to be bread hides him!

13. And what detachment does he not have from the things given him for his use! Whether they are elaborate or simple, whether they are lent to him, or are given him for a long time or a short time, whether they are taken from him, he remains equally content, perfectly stripped of everything.

14. In the same way, my dear *sisters and brothers*,* in our poverty we will be so perfectly stripped and despoiled of everything, that with the use of nothing more than what will belong to us – which will no longer be ours since we have consecrated it to God and to the association of the little design – we shall always be perfectly content whether we have much or have little or have nothing at all. For indeed our new little design requires of us an entire detachment from all things.

15. As for the chastity and purity embodied in this mystery, it is seen in the fact that this dear Saviour, virgin and beloved spouse of virgins, has eyes, tongue and heart only for his dear spouses. In a word, his use of the senses is for the sole purpose of purifying hearts and making them holy.

16. And would we not be happy if the same were true of us! If only we had eyes, ears and hearts for the dear Saviour alone, and if the entire use of our senses tended toward the holiness and purification of hearts, in accordance with the various circumstances of your sex! This is what the chastity of our very little Institute will bring about, with God's help.

17. But is not the holy obedience of this dear Saviour and Master truly marvellous! Has he ever had a thought or uttered a word of resistance to the will of the priest who consecrates, touches, and carries him, wherever he wills. O God! Yet how many reasons would this divine Saviour not have for refusing to come to our hearts when given to us or when we ourselves receive him in this holy Sacrament! This mere thought would move me to tears if my heart were not harder than marble. Nevertheless, my dear *sisters and brothers*, * this Saviour has never refused to come into our hearts at the precise moment the priest wished it. I leave to your own reflections the other marvellous perfections of this divine obedience.

18. May it please the divine Goodness that we who belong to an Institute emptied of self may have an obedience like his. May we never have a thought or feeling or word contrary in the slightest way to obedience. Let us in imitation of this dear Saviour obey like a child, not rationalizing or being concerned about anything except to allow divine Providence to lead us like a tender mother who knows what we need and who, after all, is bound to care for the children nestled at her breast, as the souls of the little design must be. O cherished and humble obedience, the certain mark of true virtue! May you always be truly perfect in all the members of our new religious body – if I may call it such, since it seems to me that it is not the reality of a body, but only its shadow.

The total double union

19. And if we desire, my dear *sisters and brothers*,* to have a model of love for God and charity towards our neighbour, where can we find it better than in the Blessed Sacrament? This mystery is called the love of loves. It gathers up in itself the whole extent, perfection, operation, continuance, constancy and expansiveness or grandeur of all holy loves.

20. Since in our cherished Congregation each member ought, according to the design, to possess the fullness of the Holy Spirit in her/his heart, and since the Congregation itself professes to be one of the most pure and perfect love of God, it will find in the Holy Eucharist much to imitate. An evident sign of the genuineness of this love will be that, with God's grace, it will have all the dimensions of "length, breadth, height and depth" which Saint Paul attributes to it.

21. Moreover, my dear *sisters and brothers*,* this Holy Sacrament is a mystery of union, and it brings this very union about. This Eucharistic Jesus unites all creatures to himself and to God,

his Father, and - think of the title *communion* – he unites all the faithful to one another in a common union. Of this union Jesus speaks in profoundly moving terms when he asks his Father that all may be one, that they may be perfectly one in him and in God, his Father, just as the Father and he are but one.

22. There, my dear *sisters and brothers*, is the end of our totally selfless Congregation. It is wholly directed toward the achievement of this **total double union:**

of ourselves and the dear neighbour with God
of ourselves with all others, whoever they may be,
of all others, among themselves and with us,
but all in Jesus and in God his Father.

23. May the divine Goodness bring us to understand the nobility of this end, and help us to be fit instruments in bringing it about.

24. You will note that I have called this double union *total*. By this word I mean to express all the perfection that can be found in the reality and practice of love of God and love of the dear neighbour.

25. May God grant that we may be able to contribute, as weak instruments, to the re-establishment in the Church of this total union of souls in God and with God.

The virtues, activities and nature of Little Design communities

26. Not to be overlong in explaining my thoughts, I shall say by way of summary, that our dear Institute ought to be all humility, and ought to profess always to cherish and to choose what is lowliest. It is in this way that the most lowly, profound and selfless humility is manifested. And so it must be all modesty, all gentleness, all candour and simplicity, wholly interior, spiritually alive. In a word, it must be empty of self, detached from everything.

27. It must be wholly filled with Jesus and with God, with a fullness which I am unable to explain to you adequately but which the divine Goodness will bring you to understand. Of this fullness I can only say to you that it brings it about that

the infinite Being of God and of Jesus, intimately present,
seems to vivify in an almost tangible way
the soul and body of a mere ‘nothing’
and cause it to live by the very holiness of
an infinite God
who possesses the immensity of all things.

28. Now, my dear *sisters and brothers*,* is not all of this found in a marvellous manner in the Eucharist? What is more humble than our dear Jesus in this mystery! What more modest, more compassionate and gentle, more simple and open, more filled with God and empty of all else!

29. There, my dear *sisters and brothers*, * is the model of the Virtue of our Institute.

30. It seems to me that in this adorable mystery, we find also the nature and the activities of our Institute.

31. The nature of our Institute presupposes a secret association of three persons living together in the same house, all brought to perfect unity by detachment from everything they might have of their own, all united to God by secret vows, all committed to the advancement of the glory of God and the sanctification of the dear neighbour.

32. For it seems to me that *our little nothing* has for its purpose the greater perfection of souls rather than merely their salvation.

33. O my dear *sisters and brothers*,*what secret intimacy of the three divine persons do we adore in the Holy Eucharist! What solemn offerings and secret consecration of the dear Jesus for all humanity! What power this august Sacrament has to advance the glory of God and the salvation of souls!

The growth and spread of Little Design communities

34. Now our little community must communicate itself: first and foremost to sixteen persons in honour of the twelve apostles and four evangelists invoked in the litany of the saints: secondly, to the seven persons dedicated in a special way to the service of mercy and charity; thirdly, to the seventy-two others who become involved through the efforts of the above-mentioned sixteen and seven. The number seventy-two is arrived at in the following way: the leader of the twenty-three is given responsibility for winning six souls for God and for their own sanctification, while each of the remaining twenty-two is to win three souls each, taking care to attract, instruct, and lead them to the practice of deep holiness.

35. In this manner, my dear *sisters and brothers*,* the Eucharist was communicated to the apostles, then to the seven deacons and to the seventy-two disciples, in order to be widely diffused by their efforts and communicated to all the rest of the faithful.

The food, homes, activities, summary

36. In our Institute, with the help of God, the food will be extremely frugal and the clothing very simple. There will be this distinction, however, that the use of food and clothing will be determined by each group according to the different circumstances of each.

37. This, my dear *sisters and brothers*,* is what we observe in the species of the Holy Eucharist. These are very common, but nevertheless they allow for differences in taste and colour according to the different kinds and quality of flour used.

38. The houses of our *sisters and brothers** should be, like the tabernacle, always locked, and the *sisters/brothers* will leave them only through obedience and to return without delay, and only in order to devote themselves to activities which advance the glory of God. Do we not see this clearly in the Holy Eucharist!

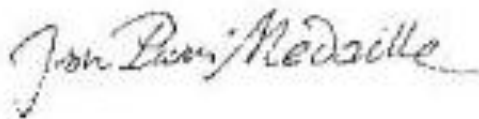
39. As to the activities of our little *sisters and brothers*,* they will be with God's help very interior, both for their own sake, as required by their Directory, and for the manner of life they will try to inspire in others so that the whole world will strive more than ever to live for God and to serve him "in spirit and in truth".

40. By serving God in spirit, we learn to live the interior life. By serving in truth, we discover the various services required of us by divine Goodness who desires all things to be in proportion, suitable and adapted to differences of sex, rank and age.

41. Now this is what the dear Jesus very clearly brings about in the Eucharist and in communicating himself to others through the Eucharist.

42. In summary, as our dear Saviour appears to us in the Eucharist as living not for himself but entirely for God his Father, and for souls redeemed by his Precious Blood, so, my dear *sisters and brothers*, * our little design and the persons who compose it will be nothing for themselves but wholly absorbed and emptied of self in God and for God and with that, they will be all for the dear neighbour, all for God and the dear neighbour, nothing for themselves. May God deign to accomplish his marvels according to the measure of his good pleasure.

Amen. Blessed be God.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Fr. Medaille". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

*Fr. Medaille used 'daughter' throughout the original Eucharistic Letter. We have taken the liberty to translate 'sisters and brothers' ... reflecting the inclusivity of The Little Design Communities today.

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May I share with you the humble thoughts which the Saviour in his measureless goodness has deigned to communicate to me concerning his design. He has revealed to me a perfect model of this little design in the Holy Eucharist – the Eucharist which is the source of all our pure and holy loves on earth.

‘Feelings and understandings concerning the Design’... Jean-Pierre Medaille wants to convey by the title, the entire very intimate intuition that God communicates to him about the spirit of the foundation, the ‘Little Design’ whose ‘weak instrument’ he will be. (Federation of SSJ, USA, 1973)

It seems that in a sudden burst of spiritual insight, Medaille ‘sees’ all the elements of a Little Design community’s lifestyle exemplified perfectly in the Eucharist. Throughout the Letter he will explain ‘the perfect model’ as he describes the mission, the evangelical counsels, the lifestyle, membership, the ministries, and the practicalities of food, clothing and houses.

From the outset he places the two together as one - the Eucharist and the Little Design community - thereby, challenging us to ‘see’ all that follows from our own deep mystical centre. “Eucharist is the source of all our pure and holy loves on earth.” The Little Design communities must live this Eucharist in the world, abiding in this deep Love, allowing this Great Love to flow through them to others and unite others to each other and to God in an ever deepening and expanding mystical union.

It is all a mystical work whose ‘source’ is pure, starting within the heart of God. Medaille firmly believes that God has inspired him to communicate this vision with us – with you. It is God’s design, not Jean-Pierre’s and not ours. We must always be mindful of the ‘spiritual revelation’ that is being imparted here in this Eucharistic Letter.

Do you experience the Spirit ‘communicating’ a little plan for your future?

Jesus, in the Eucharist, my dear ‘sister/brother’, is entirely empty of self. And ought not we also, in accordance with his will, strive to establish an Institute totally empty of self? Yes, my dear ‘sister/brother’, our cherished association is to be a body without a body, and if I dare say it, a congregation without a congregation, and perhaps in time a religious order without being a religious order. In a word, it will never appear to be anything in the world, and it will be in the eyes of God whatever he, himself, in his infinite mercy is pleased to make of his Institute.

Father Medaille plunges us immediately into the essential mystery of Jesus’ self-emptying (Phil 2) that is so characteristic of the Little Design way of life. It would seem that “it is with an urgent invitation” that we are to be about a process of establishing Little Design communities who are equally filled with God’s pure love and ...emptied of all that limits us in our false and wounded self. The initiative is God’s throughout!

“Have God alone before your eyes,
God’s good pleasure, God’s glory,
and make no account of anything else.”
(Maxim of Love, 4:1)

*Father Medaille names for The Little Design Communities their **identity** in very paradoxical and mystical language. This “body without a body”; “a congregation without a congregation; “a religious order without being a religious order” invites us to take a fresh look at possibilities for community today. This ‘being without’ and this ‘not appearing to be anything’ will create human interior tensions that challenge us to probe into deeper mystical depths. Our Little Design identity will be created by the living Triune God within us and will ask of us an entire emptying of our own egos!*

The Little Design Communities will always appear to be very insignificant - in our own eyes - and in the way others perceive us to be. The Little Design communities remain open to becoming whatever God wants us to become.

Do you see the emerging Little Design communities as Life-bringing because they strive to be egoless and only ‘whatever God wishes them to become’?

It seems to me, my dear ‘sisters/brothers’, that I envision our association – which in reality is nothing– established in a great number of places and yet established in such a hidden way that only the persons who compose it will know about it. God grant that it may be established throughout the whole Church.

Father Medaille lived in the 17th Century, often called a Missionary Century. Did he have a prophetic vision of these Little Designers being ‘mystic- missionaries’ scattered throughout the whole world? Today, the men and women who will be attracted to these Little Design communities will have sensed that they have been moving into a more contemplative way of being, possibly for some time now, and so this style of ‘community’ resonates with their souls. Little Designers, living in the paradox of being “nothing” yet “established throughout the whole church” will mean we must all be rooted in the same mystery of Jesus’ self-emptying and exaltation. (Phil 2) This movement begins with God and we must be free enough to let God act in us and through us. The beams of Love are continuously radiating upon us. We receive it freely as a ‘lavish grace’!

“Anyone who knows how to let God act in and through him/her
without too much interference
on his/her part, does many things in a short time
and never loses peace of heart.”

(Medaille, Maxim of Love 7:5)

While Medaille wrote these words down on simple paper – preserved in our archives – nearly four centuries ago... our sense is that ... a new form of community was already germinating in this seed-text of The Eucharistic Letter. Dare we say... TODAY ...it is breaking ground and spouting some new shoots? Here in this purely mystical document, full of timeless spiritual vitality, is a ‘gift’ in our time of crisis within religious life, the church, families, indeed, the world. Hopefully, we will discover it anew and allow the Spirit of God to create new truly “Eucharistic” communities all over the planet. These little communities manifesting will need no fanfare. They will simply and quietly emerge and be leaven in their own neighbourhoods, showing up here and there... wherever the Spirit blows... always creating triangles of loving relationships.

Does this ‘way of being’ attract you?

It will be, with God's help, invisible, as Jesus in the adorable Eucharist is a God who is hidden, totally invisible. Moreover, it will be very little, both in its own eyes and in reality, just as Jesus reduces himself in the smallest particle of bread and wine.

The Little Design communities will be hidden and little just as Jesus in the Eucharist is invisible and little. What is hidden in the Eucharist? The Living Triune God is hidden from the senses in the Eucharist but fully present in faith. The interior soul knows and experiences the miracle of love in the Eucharist. "Effect in me a miracle of love." (J.P. Medaille)

God's vision revealed to Medaille that the same mystery could be embodied in us. We are to become the God-bearers of Love! "Love Love and let Love love through you." Father Medaille saw all this would be accomplished "with God's help." Our true destiny as human beings is to become these dear children of God, brothers and sisters, bearing in our bodies the beams of this Divine Love.

Today, we witness many persons of Light and Love emerging here and there in many parts of the world. Their voices and actions and presence are making a difference in a small, quiet – yes, almost invisible manner - by the very quality and depth of their interior, spiritual lives. Hopefully, the ego-self will continue to diminish and more and more of Christ will shine forth through all of us. That this transformative mystery transpires in great hiddenness and ordinariness is truly awesome to behold!

*Have only one desire throughout your life:
to be and to become
the person God wants you to be,
in nature, in grace, and in glory,
for time and eternity.
(Medaille, Maxim of Love, 10:6)*

How does this BE-ing little and BE-ing invisible speak to you now?

O God, how happy our little Institute will be if it maintains this spirit of littleness, humility, and self-emptying detachment, and a life hidden for all time, and if God wills it, even for eternity.

5

Medaille seems to burst forth here with a rather sudden insight that this way of living in littleness, humility, detachment and self-emptying is the real secret of genuine happiness. Always respectful of the human condition, he uses the active verb 'maintain' to indicate the healthy on-going process of conversion and transformation.

Medaille, like Jesus, is the great encourager of hearts. He inspires us to keep "moving always towards the more, but a little more, day by day."

"If God wills it..." Medaille would seem to call the Little Designers to stay the course throughout the years as we grow in our understanding and practice of living this vision of The Little Design. The WAY will always be as 'little, hidden and self-emptied persons'. Gradually over time, we too will become INSTRUMENTS of this Great Love, immersed within our contemporary milieus.

However, Father Medaille says, we must always live in an openness and receptivity to whatever future God wills for this 'Little Design.' This indicates his own personal detachment and self-emptying and the heights of his spiritual/mystical knowledge and understanding.

Just what is this Little Design way of life doing to/for you?

Now what I find so marvellous in this new design is that it is without a visible father or mother, founder or foundress, without a house of its own. In a word, I see it stripped of everything.



Medaille continues the paradoxical “self-emptying so as to be filled with God.” These Little Design communities will have “no visible father, mother, founder, foundress, house of their own.” This being stripped of everything that one might be able to see and touch and boast about in the visible world is a radically new idea. It goes quite counter-culture for many to grasp! Medaille is telling us that we actually have something more, something worthy of divine awe, of humble gratitude. It is truly marvelous! This is God’s Little Design. It transcends the material/visible world pointing us beyond ourselves into a more mystical/spiritual world. The Little Design has come from the Spirit of God in a fresh breath-taking inspiration!

As we have pondered these words over the years, we are coming to believe that Father Medaille was hereby detaching himself - and The Little Design – from the characteristic language that is used ecclesiastically to describe canonically approved religious congregations (be they cloistered or apostolic) and secular institutes. All these have a distinct person who is the founder/foundress and a designated house that is used for gathering a community– called a motherhouse - with smaller houses scattered around attached to it. Father Medaille is informing us that these Little Design communities would be breaking with the traditional norm – no motherhouse, no hierarchical institution, no constitutions, and no superiors. It will exist as ‘a body without a body’ beyond the canons yet within the ecclesial life of Church.

Is Father Medaille pointing us to catch the ‘something new’ being announced here? Is there something unique and mystical coming to birth amongst the People of God? Is the ancient vision coming into the light of our consciousness now, in these days? Is he, too, in the moment, awakened to the awe of a new way? Is this a new wineskin for the ALL to belong? Is this “Little Design” being born into his higher consciousness as a gift for another time – a ‘perhaps in time’ as he writes? Is this NOW MOMENT the ‘perhaps in time’?

**Are you finding yourself more excited and surprised by this emergence
in our time of more ‘Little Design’ communities?**

However, through the goodness of God, it will have all of these to a greater degree. Its father and its mother, its founder and foundress, will be Jesus and Mary, invisible to the eyes of the body but clearly visible to the eyes of the spirit.

7

With Mary as our spiritual mother, we are embraced within the intense illumination of her life and spirit that she communicates with us, her daughters and sons. Mary is that good mother, that feminine model, who strongly guides the church in its Pentecostal fervor and outreach to the world. When the early disciples found themselves in Mary's presence, their fears were calmed, their faith strengthened and their zeal for souls enlivened. What a spiritual mother we have as we face the world today – struggling and transforming – seeking the more!

With Jesus as our spiritual father, we are embraced within the intense illumination of his life and spirit that he communicates with us, his daughters and sons. Jesus is that wonderful shepherd, that strong and true guide, who animates us and establishes us in right relationship with God and with the whole human family. As we go about our lives and ministries today, may we strive to live the Gospel message, internalizing the heart of the matter. We need to remember just how deeply we are marked in Christ with a spiritual paternity.

For us, in The LITTLE DESIGN, our spiritual mother and spiritual father will be Jesus and Mary. Our generativity then throughout the ages will come forth from these two great lovers. Father Medaille says... “we will be filled with ALL to an even greater degree.” The abiding inspiration of the Spirit within all of the members will be the source of the life and vitality of these new emerging Little Design communities. The call and the challenge for us today will be to abide in this quality of faithful listening to the ever-renewing, ever-creating Spirit of God who, throughout the years, promises rebirth and reform. The Spirit will be guiding us to be ‘whatever God wants us to be’ in every generation. Constantly receptive to the will of God, like our founder and foundress, Jesus and Mary, we too will thrive and be generative in many fruitful ministries. Under Spirit inspiration, we will birth a family of believers – in every generation - who will draw forth more and more persons into the fullness of ‘abundant life’ in God. There is an endless inclusivity that keeps spiraling forth from this pristine essence of ‘Oneness’ within the Heart of God.

Do you feel the maternal/paternal love of Jesus and Mary?

As for our part in it, my dear sisters/brothers, that amounts to nothing but a hindrance to his work.



It will always be challenging to hold our human desires and urges in some kind of peacefulness until God's grace prompts us to take action. Sometimes this 'my doing nothing' is the passivity that is pure wisdom! 'Never go ahead of grace through imprudent eagerness but await its moment in peace, and when it comes to you, follow it with great gentleness and courage.' (M.P 6:9)

This maxim is so central to the interiority and receptivity that is required of all Little Designers as we strive to abide in this way of being and doing for a lifetime. 'As for our part in it ... THAT... amounts to nothing but a hindrance.' At first glance, this might sound very unflattering and demeaning to intelligent men and women, especially those filled with enthusiasm and eagerness for the advancement of holiness for self and others. And there are pressing social needs to be met in the neighborhoods around us, so how could we not get busy and do something! There can be a variety of expressions of Love amongst the members according to their ages and personalities and the spiritual gifts each one has received. But wait...

As a wise spiritual director, we are confident that Father Medaille was profoundly aware of the impulsivity that drives certain human beings - especially in times of uncertainty and insecurity- to spread themselves in many directions. We can waste considerable time and energy in frantic activity and busyness. These are often our own feeble attempts to control projects and movements or to devise and invent and create some kind of visible 'sign' of our own good works. It will be critical to examine our 'works' from time to time. If left unexamined, there can be all kinds of unnecessary toil and the results of our activities come to mean 'nothing' in the big scheme of things. There is a huge difference between codependent actions and charitable actions! Spiritual things, spiritual happenings, flow from God. Follow these inspirations of grace when they come.

This is Fr. Medaille's guiding instruction and it is critical to the whole success of the vision of the Little Design Communities. He just wants us to get it right! There is no ambivalence or flattery or appeal to any special distinction. Everything in the Eucharistic Letter points to littleness, hiddenness and self-emptying.

Anyone who knows how to let God act in and through him/her without too much interference on his/her part, does many things in a short time and never loses peace of heart. M.P. 7:3

Do you sense the Spirit guiding you in a particular direction?

Accordingly, let us look at Jesus in the Holy Eucharist completely stripped of everything. We give him adornments and we take them away at will. He accepts them or lets them go without any resistance. And yet he is his own Author, his own Father, so to speak – as he is ours – and the priest at the consecration is no more than the instrument of his power.



The Eucharist is pure, whole, and entire Triune God - whether the externals or the adornments are present or not. They do not change the 'essence'. So likewise, the Little Designers must not think about what they need to have externally in order to be Little Design communities. The essence is simply a union of all persons living in the Heart of God. Is this a caution for us in these times? We must not be concerned about 'the adornments' and what is non-essential as we move into living this profound vision on into the Third Millennium.

This 'being stripped of everything' that is not one's true self... is a holy work. It is the Divine Therapy (Thomas Keating's words for the transformative process) that heals and restores us to our diamond centre (Thomas Merton's words for the true self). Yes, by the mystical power of God working within us – and our cooperation and receptivity - we will be and become the persons God created us to be: fully human, fully alive, to the glory of God! A pivotal maxim: 'Have only one desire throughout your life: to be and to become the person God wills you to be in nature, in grace, and in glory, for time and for eternity.' M.P. 10:6

We, as Little Designers, must hold fast to the essential essence at the heart of our way of life. In all its pristine essence lies a God of Infinite Love who draws us to the Eucharistic table feast to be nourished - take and eat and share! This Life makes us penetrate more deeply still into what Eucharist truly signifies: the unity of all in the Son who unites us all to the Father in the same unity which he and the Father share. We begin to experience 'this communion' which unites all and leaves nothing outside of it... and leads to the living of THIS love, even in the everyday details of our lives. The 'adornments' are not the essentials. These may come and go. God-with-us remains! The giving or taking away of 'adornments' is only an affective sign of the detachment of Jesus. Can you look up and see only 'Jesus'?

Can I 'see the essence' and not stress so much the adornments in my life?

O what a parallel between our real nothingness and the self-emptying of the dear Saviour in his divine Sacrament! What a condescension that for so great a mystery, he makes use of a priest, a frail and often sinful man! What condescension that he should make use of us for our little Institute!



Such marvelous goodness that God's creative plan 'needs us' to fulfill God's dream, to make manifest God's little design. Just as God needs the priest to make Jesus present in the Eucharist, so God needs us to be the instruments in communicating Pure Love to others. This will require mature faith to 'see Christ' present in the Eucharist and to 'see Christ' present in all others, whoever they may be. How good our God is to use us for this 'little plan' of spreading, communicating and multiplying LOVE in a big world! Is the worldwide web the 'new COMMUNAL gathering place' for great lovers to find the encouragement and the support needed as we remain faithful and fruitful in our mission?

Yes, in summary, the parallels between 'our real nothingness' and Jesus' self-emptying in the Eucharist seem clearer now. Once again, I find Father Medaille's use of the interaction between the words 'what a condescension' and 'for so great a mystery' truly wise and profoundly mystical. Just as he is so conscious of the grandeur and dignity of being called into this Little Design way of life, he reminds us, that for God, this must be a condescension, a coming down voluntarily, to be on equal terms with inferiors and choosing amicably to empower us. And doing all this for us, God makes a display of such sweet courtesy toward us! Is there possibly some divine comedy here? In spite of our weakness, our nothingness, and even our sinfulness, God triumphs in these humble, receptive souls. Such is the power and generosity of our God! Ours is a God who so loves the world; a God who is so desirous of sharing intimate communion with us. God is a lover of humanity and never shames the human condition. Jesus came as Emmanuel to remind us we were made for a greater destiny ... created for glory! Let's go forth now and be joyful bearers of this 'good news'...

*See often the greatness of your soul in God
and its nothingness in itself.*

M.P. 1:4

Can you marvel at being such an 'instrument of God' in the world?

In the second place, in the most holy Eucharist we have a perfect model of the poverty, chastity and obedience of our little Institute.



*Father Medaille does not speak here of canonical vows as they have been understood in the history of religious life within the Church. He refers rather to the **three evangelical counsels** named in the Gospels - poverty, chastity, obedience - and shows how these three virtues/energies within every person must be channeled and used for the enhancement of life for all humanity.*

The Little Design, Father Medaille shares with us here, is to be an identifiable new way of life for all Christians. He takes great care in elaborating its core principles and how it can be lived within an ever-changing world milieu. Religious women already living canonical vows may see this as a wonderful spiritual renewal animating their own living of the evangelical counsels. But dare we probe further.

Could it be that there is a prophetic call to look beyond what already exists and in characteristic Medaillan spirit, point to 'the always more'. Yes, there is something that is more inclusive of all 'the dear neighbours' and offers a genuine form to a mystical spirituality of ONENESS that the Gospel of Jesus keeps calling us all to live. Like the Eucharist itself, ALL are equal and ALL are invited to the table for com-union and COMMUNITY.

We can observe the careful and respectful pen of Pere Medaille crafting this Letter... in a century that was trying to break ground within the given norms and yet ... always open to 'whatever God is pleased to make of his Institute.' This Eucharistic Letter has been quietly feeding the contemplative roots of our spirituality and today it would seem to be sprouting to the surface of our consciousness with a new awakening. There is a shining new awareness. The same founder, but a new direction ... a future full of hope... is being given us... that expands the boundaries of canonical religious life to include all persons. Beyond the norm, beyond the form... manifests the Little Design! Such an epiphany!

The Little Design Community needs no canonical norms, yet follows the heart of any religious consecration in a life fully committed to the following of the Christ of the Gospels. It seems the time to risk new 'holy bondings' within the human family. Is it the time for all the Great Lovers of God to unite around the world in this little, hidden, self-emptied way? Can we welcome all within this expansive charism?

Have you experienced this shift in consciousness?

Is there anything so poor in the world as this great Saviour who hides himself, not only under the reality of a piece of bread, but under its form and appearance, in an impoverishment and diminishment so great that a mere fragment of what seems to be bread hides him!

Medaille starts his exploration into “the poverty as lived by the members of a Little Design community” with the very mystical experience of the poverty of Jesus in the Eucharist. As Jean-Pierre says about the Eucharist: ‘The great savior hides himself in an impoverishment so great that a mere fragment of what seems to be bread hides him.’

We belong to a network of persons who desire to live intentionally in the ‘poverty of the little design’, deliberately directing our energies towards life’s enhancement. We will, in justice, put our portion of Life’s energies at the service of the whole.

We are encouraged in this new direction by the understanding coming forth in both physics and biology. “These sciences point to the realization that the part can produce the whole... These ‘morphogenetic fields’ shape and direct the entire animate and inanimate creation. If a member of a biological species acquires a new behavior long enough, the morphic resonance will set up a reciprocal effect among all the members of the whole species. Morphic resonance can be worldwide, even cosmic. The implications are astounding!

(insights gleaned from Barbara Fiand in Wrestling with God. She quotes Willis Jager, Search for the Meaning of Life)

We dare to believe that the contemplative-mystical ‘morphic resonance’ of The Little Design vision has a strong influence on our present mega-structures. When persons connect themselves to God’s field of compassion, they just become a force, a conductor of this Great Love-energy to others. It simply happens that ‘LOVE loves through them. Mercy and kindness flow through them...’ Their inner life of union with Love overflows into more loving relationships with others and with all creation. There is a constant gathering up of ‘more’ persons who bear the beams of Love.

This means, then, that Little Designers in their hidden, little, and self-emptied manner, are becoming part of changing/transforming the consciousness of our world. And all this happens in great mystery and poverty of spirit.

Can you lovingly accept that you are a ‘fragment’ of God’s love?

And what detachment does he not have from the things given him for his use! Whether they are elaborate or simple, whether they are lent to him, or are given him for a long time or a short time, whether they are taken from him, he remains equally content, perfectly stripped of everything.

There is a remarkable meditation on ‘detachment’ hidden within this text. What are we to do about ‘the things’ we have been given for our use in this life? Does it matter in our mind and heart whether they are simple or elaborate things? Are we discontent unless we ‘have and own’ certain things? What is our freedom and detachment around all things of matter? How attached are we when we experience a loss of something that belongs to us – be it taken from us violently or mismanaged, or borrowed and not returned?

We share now a consciousness that the universe belongs to us all. We are each responsible for co-operating with the global effort to be contributive and accountable for our share of giving and our share of receiving what is needed for the good of the whole.

And so, we choose a lifestyle that calls us to mindfulness of ‘enough’ – when it is enough work, enough prayer, enough leisure, enough study, enough food, enough furnishings, etc. We attempt to maintain our lifestyle in a harmonious balance. We respect each other’s age and gifts and recognize the inter-dependence of others to contribute their share to the common venture.

Little Design communities will have no common bank account and there are no financial obligations to each other. Everyone who belongs to a ‘Little Design’ community will act as a mature, responsible and accountable adult person. If two or three persons should decide to share a common living together arrangement and/or a common ministry, then each person will contribute to the ministry and/or living costs according to his/her means and what is age-appropriate. This co-operative exploration of The Little Design vision for today will be enriched by the inter-dependent interactions among as many as possible men and women from many walks of life. It is an inclusive, global vision. Once again, we voluntarily put our ‘abundance’ into the circle of Love. It is all lavish gift received and lavish gift shared!

Can you say that you are ‘equally content’ with much or with little?

In the same way, my dear sisters/brothers, in our poverty we will be so perfectly stripped and despoiled of everything, that with the use of nothing more than what will belong to us – which will no longer be ours since we have consecrated it to God and to the association of the little design – we shall always be perfectly content whether we have much or have little or have nothing at all. For indeed our new little design requires of us an entire detachment from all things.

Little Designers will live from the contemplative consciousness that we are radically dependent upon God, the Source of life, for our whole being-ness. This interiority and consciousness shape our attitudes and choices in daily life. Contentment “with much, with little, with nothing at all” and gratitude for everything is the stance we attempt to maintain in living every moment. This is the pure freedom of the poverty of the little design.

‘We own nothing, not even our own lives, which always, at every moment come to us as Gift.’ (Elaine Prevallet, SL, A Wisdom for Life) For sure, this is radical dependence upon God and radical freedom for the soul. This poverty opens our hands and hearts to live in an attitude of gratitude and generosity. Over time, our consciousness will introduce us to the ‘law of reciprocity’ that is at the core of the whole mystery of the universe charged with God’s lavish grace of self-communicating LOVE. We have only to receive it as Gift. Let this Great Love be done within us.

Yes, this living flame of Pure Love will purge us of our selfishness and egocentricity, but at the same time, we will come to know a wonderful release into a deeper joy and freedom and contentment.

‘Love is the law of God’s life in Trinity. That law expresses itself in nature in the fact that everything that is, is in continual exchange.’ It is like a great round dance. Will you join us the circle of Great Love!

Can you experience the ‘no sting’ in this poverty of the Little Design?

As for the chastity and purity embodied in this mystery, it is seen in the fact that this dear Saviour, virgin and beloved spouse of virgins, has eyes, tongue and heart only for his dear spouses. In a word, his use of the senses is for the sole purpose of purifying hearts and making them holy.

Medaille ushers us into “the chastity as lived by the members of a Little Design community” with the very mystical experience of Jesus as virgin and spouse in the Eucharist. There is something for the senses to relate to in the bread and the wine elements, yet there is something deeper that the eyes of faith behold – the whole Triune God! As we enter more deeply into our contemplative awareness of God’s deep loving preference for us, we, likewise, will respond as Little Designers, using our entire sensory humanity with a preference for God in the challenges of each day’s unfolding.

We are men and women who strive to abide in our contemplative stance with ‘eyes, ears and hearts focused on Divine Love.’ We desire to stay awake and aware in all the challenges of each day’s unfolding. We will need to remain faithful to prayer and interior reflection so that our powerful generativity can be channeled into a creativity that serves the good of others. Creativity is a sign of God’s presence. When we are alive in the Spirit, God lives in us and we too create.

Little Designers live our baptismal consecration. Some may be single by choice, others will be married, some widowed, all however, will be great lovers of God. The bond of Love will keep inspiring us to be ever in God, for God and of God. We recognize how fragile and insecure this new Little Design community is on its own merits but if we trust God and allow God to be its fullness, then, it will be great and it will be fruitful. We allow ourselves, as far as possible, to be empowered by God to live fruitfully the chastity of the Little Design.

When we gather from time to time with other companions who share the same life-dream, we offer support, strength, and encouragement to be faithful over time, in this ‘right ordering’ of our relationships with God, with self, with all others, with creation. We delight in being a community of soul-friends!

How do you experience your ‘creative energy’ being channeled these days?

And would we not be happy if the same were true of us! If only we had eyes, ears and hearts for the dear Saviour alone, and if the entire use of our senses tended toward the holiness and purification of hearts, in accordance with the various circumstances of your sex! This is what the chastity of our very little Institute will bring about, with God's help.



We are men and women who have fallen in love with God and have awakened to the 'sacredness' of our bodies as temples of the indwelling God. Our full sensory body, then, is God-given and requires us to be responsible and accountable to use it for God's glory and the right ordering of all our relationships.

We understand that Father Medaille is hereby calling us to be fully alive as men and women in our total humanity – psychologically, emotionally and spiritually. He invites us to keep growing into an enjoyment of the inclusivity and equality with women and men who cherish the uniqueness of each other's vocation within the human family. There is a divine ordering that is holy!

*The chastity of the Little Design will be an **embodied spirituality** that invites all the members to live consciously as 'temples of the living God' and allow this Godly love to flow through all their senses in healthy and wholesome lifestyles. **Chastity is a 'celebration' of the senses** not a negation. This is revolutionary for 17th century spirituality and even today is rarely proclaimed! We are called to be happy and healthy, not mortified and repressed in the experience of living in our bodies! Imagine the possibility of all these 'living temples' awakening to consciousness and rising up into their full splendor – 'being and becoming the persons God wills them to be, in nature, in grace, in glory, for time and for eternity. M.P. 10:6*

We will take time daily to pause in mindfulness as we go about our ordinary routines of living ~ eating, sleeping, conversing, walking and drinking tea. We will pay attention to our need for counseling in the areas of emotional pain and body healing as well as nutrition and fitness. Our bodies and the earth-body are wounded. We will do our part to care for our own 'creation' and contribute in some small way to the wellness of the whole planet.

What is my 'self-care' plan?

But is not the holy obedience of this dear Saviour and Master truly marvellous! Has he ever had a thought or uttered a word of resistance to the will of the priest who consecrates, touches and carries him, wherever he wills. O God! Yet how many reasons would this dear Saviour not have for refusing to come to our hearts when given to us or when we ourselves receive him in this holy Sacrament! This mere thought would move me to tears if my heart were not harder than marble. Nevertheless, my dear sister/brother, this Saviour has never refused to come into our hearts at the precise moment the priest wished it. I leave to your own reflections the other marvellous perfections of this divine obedience.

Medaille focuses us into the “obedience as lived by the members of the Little Design community” by revealing to us Jesus’ pure and constant listening to God. When we grow into this same interiority, our ‘neediness’ gradually falls away and our obedience will become purer and more perfect. There is no need for refusal, no need for resistance to the will of God, when one is fully living in this divine communion. We wake each morning to listen like faithful disciples. (Is.50:4-5)

Discernment becomes a way of life for us. We experience God’s unconditional love and total availability and openness in such a way that it evokes a reciprocal response of ‘obedience’ – listening well – within our own hearts. We desire to be and to do whatever it is that God’s Spirit within asks us to be or to do. We desire to give back our ‘obedience’ in the same manner – with no word of resistance, no hesitation to God’s voice within, only with the best unconditional love we can offer. We actually live in the expectation of being ‘moved always towards the more!’ We are actively engaging in a relationship with Life and Love and so we expect to be challenged to expand and transcend our former ways and earlier habits and boundaries that have limited us. It will be the norm: “Now, I am making the whole of creation new.” (Rev. 21)

We have come to see ourselves as living in a **covenant of co-operation** with each other. Each person is responsible for discovering his/her own unique giftedness. Each person determines what services they are able to contribute. We carefully guard and cherish this **partnership of equals**. In Little Design communities there is no superior, no hierarchy, no matriarchy/patriarchy, no power-over, no dominance, no competition, and no comparisons. We commit ourselves to helping one another stay true in this covenant.

What do I understand by discernment in daily life?

May it please the divine Goodness that we who belong to an Institute emptied of self may have an obedience like his. May we never have a thought or feeling or word contrary in the slightest way to obedience. Let us in imitation of this dear Saviour obey like a child, not rationalizing or being concerned about anything except to allow divine Providence to lead us like a tender mother who knows what we need and who, after all, is bound to care for the children nestled at her breast, as the souls of the little design must be. O cherished and humble obedience, the certain mark of true virtue! May you always be truly perfect in all the members of our new religious body – if I may call it such, since it seems to me that it is not the reality of a body, but only its shadow.

Father Medaille longs for the members of this ‘new body’ to grasp this new vision of obedience solely as “listening to God”. Once again, Medaille understands so well our humanity and its fears and tensions in releasing our whole lives over to this Divine plan. So, he is inspired to place us with a God who is “a nurturing tender mother who knows our needs.” Beautiful imagery for us as children of God to see ourselves as “nestled at the breast.” More easily, we can now relax inwardly and fall into a confident trust and obedient response. This image of God as tender Mother holds an energy that opens the heart to obey!

*Yahweh, my heart has no lofty ambitions; my eyes do not look too high,
I am not concerned with great affairs or marvels beyond my scope.
Enough for me to keep my soul tranquil and quiet
like a child in its mother’s arms, as content as a child that has been weaned.
Rely on Yahweh, now and for always! [Ps.31](#)*

When our obedience becomes so one with God’s desires, we start to act more disposed to the fluidity of God’s life and God’s work flowing through us. We become almost invisible - “a shadow” – and God becomes tangible and visible in and through us. **Such an awesome mystery of union!** So, when people look at us, they will see the great fruit of obedience in love ~ yes, it manifests in our good works.

*“Your zeal will always be in proportion to the love of God you have in your heart.
If it springs from a great love, then it will be great.” [M.P. 11:1](#)*

Who of us could not give a full “yes’ to such a good God?

And if we desire, my dear sisters and brothers, to have a model of love for God and charity towards our neighbour, where can we find it better than in the Blessed Sacrament? This mystery is called the love of loves. It gathers up in itself the whole extent, perfection, operation, continuance, constancy and expansiveness or grandeur of all holy loves.



From within our human condition, we all know that our relationships, while bringing us some of the greatest joys and satisfactions on the journey, can also cause us enormous suffering, hardship and disappointment. We do, as Father Medaille implies, often desire to know and understand just how we will ever be able to DO this love of God and charity towards my neighbour with any great effectiveness? We need a model.

The Eucharist is the model. It is 'the love of loves'. Medaille desires that all Little Designers will come often to partake of this holy mystery, for it will, one day, reveal to them that they are already living in the same expansiveness of Love. "I in you and you in me, may we be completely one." (Jn.17) Sometimes the vitality and energy and union simply leap from host to heart and heart to host in a kind of simultaneous 'communion'. When we approach Eucharist from now on, I pray that our eyes might be opened, and our faith reveal this profound mystery to us ~ the oneness of all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ. For it truly is one bread, one body, one Lord of all. It is a unity that at the same time respects the uniqueness and diversity of all our relationships.

Regarding our participation in Eucharist today, we are getting a sense that God may be moving many of us into a 'dark night' with a call to go deeper. It is time to leave the senses with their longing for satisfaction and gratification with the exterior rituals ... and begin to embrace Eucharist as a 'mystical supper' - a 'mystical encounter.' We are being invited to participate more deeply in an intimacy with God, who being all Love, unites and effects a communion in Love with us and with all others right around the table. "Effect in me a miracle of love." (J.P. Medaille) Can we be there simply to receive and pass on the great LOVE within the gathered assembly? Yes, be there in a quiet beholding the MYSTERY. After all these years, we wonder, do we really get it? Do we believe the grandeur and extent, the expansiveness, constancy and operation of this union in God's Love that changes everything. Here is the source of all our holy loving ... of self, of one another, of God!

What happens when I focus my attention at Eucharist now?

Since in our cherished Congregation each member ought, according to the design, to possess the fullness of the Holy Spirit in her/his heart, and since the Congregation itself professes to be one of the most pure and perfect love of God, it will find in the Holy Eucharist much to imitate. An evident sign of the genuineness of this love will be that, with God's grace, it will have all the dimensions of "length, breadth, height and depth" which Saint Paul attributes to it.

Here, Father Medaille celebrates the heart of our 'mystical vocation' as Little Designers. It is God's grace inflowing each member that animates our capacity for loving... that in time, takes on "the length, breadth, height and depth" of God's love. Medaille sees the Eucharist and our lives as parallel. When all the members are enkindled with this pure and holy love, they will become the Congregation of the Great Love of God.

We get a sense that Father Medaille's emphasis here on the call and invitation being extended to 'each member' to possess the fullness of the Holy Spirit, is central to the Little Design. There is always a high regard for the individual person's call to holiness and his/her intimate union with God. No one is left behind. Each member contributes to the quality of loving within the whole Body. The communal container, 'The Little Design' professes to be one of the most pure and perfect love. The individual members uniting mystically around the globe, as a collective group, manifest this divine LOVE-in-action. This new relationship of neighbour- with neighbour- with God is a continual 'divine round dancing' that has an energy and enthusiasm that makes people get moving beyond existing boundaries and borders.

Yes, there appears once again, in little pockets around the world, that quality of Love that makes walls/animosities/enemies come tumbling down. And simply and quietly, here and there, persons who are beacons of light and hope shine upon our cities and world. Some of us exclaim, "Could it be the length and breadth, height and depth of God's love clearly manifesting upon our planet, through some human beings ... through some Little Designers ... through me?"

Our dear Abba Jean Pierre knows that all of this is only possible "with God's grace." With gentle respect and understanding for the pedagogical pace of God working within each person, Father Medaille simply keeps inviting us to step into 'the more.' Stay the course. Remain faithful to Eucharist. As time goes on, you will see the sacred fire of Love glowing in your own hearts.

As a member of Little Design, what is my response to the Spirit's life indwelling me?

Moreover, my dear sisters/brothers, this Holy Sacrament is a mystery of union, and it brings this very union about. This Eucharistic Jesus unites all creatures to himself and to God, his Father, and - think of the title *communion* – he unites all the faithful to one another in a common union. Of this union Jesus speaks in profoundly moving terms when he asks his Father that all may be one, that they may be perfectly one in him and in God, his Father, just as the Father and he are but one.

The Eucharist makes Christ present in a relational dynamic that unites us to the Triune God. Eucharist invites us to make ourselves present to Christ, to one another and to the world. This ‘communion’ is accomplished by God. When the Little Designers are living in this Divine communion they become instruments of unity. This quality of unity is a gift of God and challenges us in connecting with the energy of our inter-relatedness. Jesus Himself cries out to his Father to call forth a gathering of persons to share with them the very same mission of unity. “May they all be one, as you are in me and I am in you, may they all be one.” (Jn.21)

Ponder here the mystical nature of our relationships in this total double union. We don’t accomplish the union... it is of divine origin... a mystery... a beholding that leaves us, weak instruments, in awe of God, that Higher Power, who works through us in our human, physical relationships, in the here and now. God’s love keeps taking on flesh and language and gestures that incarnate Love today... yes, through us Little Designers who live and work in a Big World. All are called into this communion... with ALL.

“Communion is a principle of life. It is the principle of the Universe. It refers to the fact of interconnectedness and interrelatedness among all that exists. Through this principle, relationship is perceived as the essence of being and becoming, and contemporary physics demonstrates this. The question scientists ask is who/what makes this so? And the answer is beyond the field of science. The nature mystic knows it is an energy that transcends all things. The Christian mystic calls it God and God is love, so the Christian knows that Love is the answer. So the heart of any communion is Love. The principle of communion affirms that the intricate web of relationships that exist throughout the Universe is another law of God. It invites us to see ourselves in relationship to the community of all beings. So our charism of communion is at the heart of the Universe.” (Sr. Monica Hartnett, notes on the Eucharistic Letter)

Does this COMMUNION fill you with awe?

There, my dear brothers/sisters,* is the end of our totally selfless Congregation. It is wholly directed toward the achievement of this total double union: of ourselves and the dear neighbour with God of ourselves with all others, whoever they may be, of all others, among themselves and with us, but all in Jesus and in God his Father.

22

Here Fr. Medaille gives us our mission statement. This is where we are ALL going. The single end of a totally selfless Little Design community will be a group of persons living in ‘total double union.’ Our thrust towards union must be deeply personal, radically relational and profoundly human, as was that of Jesus. Our mission, like Jesus’, must spring to life in the midst of the world, just as it is now – encountering the men and women of our day with all the difficulties and opportunities that we face daily. We look for no short cuts or escapes from our present reality... where God is ... right here, right now!

The depth of this kind of genuine unity will require of us that we enter into our relationships mindful of our own self, including our shadow. Our daily examen of consciousness will challenge us to consider our attachments and our neediness. Aware of these, we call upon God’s grace to correct, amend and restore any imbalances or poverties ...so that we might enter into a more authentic relationship with self and others. Many times, we will experience the Great Lover purging us, emptying us of our false and wounded ego selves. Codependent patterns of relating will need to be reworked into truly loving partnerships. Our deep prayer now might be: ‘I desire to unite my life to your life, my thoughts to your thoughts, my affections to your affections, my heart to your heart, my works to your works, my whole self to yourself.’ (Medaille, Maxims of Perfection, Part Two, Chapter 3)

We speak today of ‘active and inclusive love.’ We all desire to be consumed with Love, seized by Love, enkindled by Love, touched by Love, taken up into Love... and this Love will flow into our presence to all people we meet. This Love will unite us to all. For us and for Fr. Medaille and for all mystics – this union with God and union with one another - cannot be untangled into separate threads. The mission of ‘total double union’ interweaves all our relationships with one another. There is no hierarchy! One Love unites all. Our spirituality, when it is faithfully responded to, will lead us to a mysticism of relationships. However, this noble and pure END cannot be ‘known’ unless there is – at the same time as the receiving of Divine Love - an emptying of all that is false and illusory in our ego self.

Are you becoming more mindful of the simultaneous self-emptying and being filled with God?

May the divine Goodness bring us to understand the nobility of this end, and help us to be fit instruments in bringing it about.

23

To achieve this noble end - total double union - is humanly impossible. Medaille prays that God's Divine Goodness will reveal to us the wisdom to understand it. Over time, the grace and energy and capacity to accomplish this 'total double union' will come from God and will flow through us 'instruments'. Once again, we find Jean-Pierre's endearing addressing of God as 'Divine Goodness' as the generative power and nurturance that flows from Goodness to goodness and brings forth well-being throughout all creation.

Becoming a "fit instrument" would seem to happen as the fruitfulness that comes with years of faithful practice of these familiar maxims:

Strive to be empty of all, detached from earthly affections (2:2)

Be receptive to grace in the moment. (6:9)

Maintain peace of heart by living in the present moment and avoid haste. (7:1, 5)

Like the cello and violin and potter's clay, we are disposed to be the Master Musician's or Master Potter's finest work of art. Throughout all creation, there is that 'groaning for completion' as God, who is all Love, active and inclusive Love, draws us into a unity in diversity that is the fulfillment of our destiny. 'May we all be one.'

Father Medaille uses the phrase 'the nobility of this end.' Was he hereby pointing us to our birthright, our rank and privilege as human beings in the family of God? We were born for this work, for this excellent dignity, for this magnanimous privilege of being sons and daughters of God. As heirs of this Kingdom of Love, we share in the life and love that is in continual 'divine round dance' in the Triune God. Father Medaille wants to awaken in us the sublime vocation of our being human and being fully alive. Humanity and divinity are made for this divine communing and there is a mutual partnership in the dancing.

Rise up, dear daughters and sons and claim your life work:

*Be and become the person God wants you to be,
in nature, in grace and in glory, for time and for eternity." M.P. 10:6*

Are you enjoying the divine round dance yet?

You will note that I have called this double union *total*. By this word I mean to express all the perfection that can be found in the reality and practice of love of God and love of the dear neighbour.

24

Medaille here is explaining the ‘total’ double union as the whole process of being willing and ready to take the next step in loving. One is able to move only when the human spirit and the Holy Spirit are at one. This unity calls for a great humility and an openness to allow the ego-self to be diminished. Once one comes to understand one’s right place in the order of things, one can more easily detach from one’s own plans and see the wisdom and timing of the bigger plans of God. With God, nothing is impossible.

The ‘reality and practice of love of God and love of the dear neighbour’ seem to be inexhaustible mysteries. There will always be that movement towards the more... daily, a little more. What will this journey into the fullness and perfection of Love look like in our day?

TODAY ... the world is surely waiting for more men and women of this great desire to respond to the call to re-engage with the world in this new kind of mystical relationship. There is in this higher/larger consciousness, a ‘power of love’ that challenges the ‘will to power’ upon which so much of society is structured. Yes, for being in the world in this new mode, these persons must be prepared to suffer persecution, ridicule and misunderstanding... even from their own kin. But they are no strangers to pain – from within or without. No matter what disagreeable things happen to them, they have grown to accept and love all courageously. They have come to trust how LOVE turns all to sweetness. Whatever the cost, they joyfully move forward singing their canticle of love. Great Lover’s prophetic message fills them with contentment: Endure sufferings faithfully and you will see this sacred fire of love grow in your heart. No longer fearful, no longer oppressive, they dance in the fire!

Imagine what SMALL communities of great lovers can do as they circle the world with Divine Love loving through them?

May God grant that we may be able to contribute, as weak instruments, to the re-establishment in the Church of this total union of souls in God and with God.

25

Here, Father Medaille reveals the apostolic end of the Little Design communities. He sees them as men and women called to work for the gathering together of persons. He sees us as ‘weak instruments’ instructing the Mystical Body of Christ and bringing many souls into the Trinitarian life of Love. We get a sense that this is all done in little ways, in hidden ways, in the daily ordinariness of life.

Medaille is confident by now that the members of the Little Design have mastered the understanding that it will be God’s love acting in them and through them bringing all these good fruits about. They are at ease in the little plan.

He is looking beyond The Little Design as a community within itself and sees it spreading throughout the entire Church. We are to be then, ecclesial men and women, who experience a unique mission of unity in and for the Church. Such a divine calling that follows in the footsteps of Jesus and his manner of attracting and inviting others to ‘Come follow Me... and I will give you life, abundant life.’

“The practice of humility hollows out in us a place, where will appear, through the efficacy of the Eucharistic revelation, the experience of the dynamism of the plenitude of the love which is the Holy Spirit. By this Spirit the Son makes us participants of His union, with His Father, uniting us to one another in the same unity. The dynamism of the experience of this ‘total double union’ obliges us each day to live in an intensity which can only overflow in a witness of person to person, so that we can contribute to the re-establishment in the Church of this total union.” (Adrien Demoustier, SJ, writing on the Eucharistic Letter, 1968)

How do I see my contribution within the ecclesial community?

Not to be overlong in explaining my thoughts, I shall say by way of summary, that our dear Institute ought to be all humility, and ought to profess always to cherish and to choose what is lowliest. It is in this way that the most lowly, profound and selfless humility is manifested. And so it must be all modesty, all gentleness, all candour and simplicity, wholly interior, spiritually alive. In a word, it must be empty of self, detached from everything.

At this moment in the Eucharistic Letter, Father Medaille hopes that the Little Designers will have come to a clearer understanding of the spiritual interiority and intent of this movement and are now feeling ready to profess, cherish and choose this as a definitive way of life. Humility will be its foundation. All the other virtues - modesty, gentleness, candour and simplicity - are the overflowing manifestation of spiritually alive persons.

In any healthy spiritual life, that has the genuine potential for growth, for interiority, for leading to a mystical life... there must necessarily be that passage through a 'dark night' of struggle and suffering, as the false and wounded ego-self is being diminished and purged. It is necessary to be mindful that there will be occasions along our paschal journey that cause us, in our human relationships, to undergo some radical self-emptying. There is a spiritual necessity for this being stripped of everything that is false and illusory and created by the ego self: our arrogance, our pride, our need to control. The lure to power and self-importance, being first, being right - all these need to be swallowed up in the transformative process God is accomplishing in the depths of the soul. All this will usually be accomplished through very real and concrete painful situations, unique to each person. Humility is embracing the truth of who we really are – dear children of God and that is enough!

This purgation is how we pass through 'our spiritualization process' and come to the full blossoming of our true selves. With time, we recognize the 'pure diamond self' (Merton's image for the true self) shining in all its radiance within us. God makes it all happen – over the years – by our receptivity and cooperation with grace. Now, living more and more in our true self, we find humility, simplicity and gentleness abide. Father Medaille encourages us throughout the Eucharistic Letter to become these mystic souls. Aspire always to this pure love of God, and at the same time, be willing to undergo the purgations. Our daily mantra might be: "Empty me and fill me with your great love." Abide here.

Are you awake to the flow of grace within you?

It must be wholly filled with Jesus and with God, with a fullness which I am unable to explain to you adequately but which the divine Goodness will bring you to understand. Of this fullness I can only say to you that it brings it about that the infinite Being of God and of Jesus, intimately present, seems to vivify in an almost tangible way the soul and body of a mere ‘nothing’ and cause it to live by the very holiness of an infinite God who possesses the immensity of all things.

Only the Divine Goodness will help the little Designers to understand how the interior Trinitarian life will totally fill them and all their activities. With awe, he marvels that these men and women – ‘the souls and bodies of a mere nothing’ – will tangibly experience the touch of the infinite God ‘vivifying’ them and causing them to live by the very holiness of God.

Many times we hear each other speaking about ‘living in the Heart of God’ and proclaiming ‘we are men and women of active and inclusive love’ ... and then in listening to each other’s conversations, we still often see and hear a joylessness, a frustration, an inability to move out of negativity and patterns of dysfunction. Something doesn’t ring true!

What’s wrong? Why do these two – words and actions – seemingly not align in the truth? For in truth, if one is really living in the Heart of God, then, as Fr. Medaille says, there will be vitality and spiritual aliveness in the person, in the community. Our sense of what is often missing in our expectations of self and each other, is that we need to acknowledge, that at the same time as we are living in the Heart of God, we may also have an ego-self acting out. We will all need to address our codependence and attachments if healthy ‘loving’ is to become integral to our new way of life in these Little Design communities.

The interplay of ‘a dying somewhere’ and then ‘a rising to new life’ must be the constant Paschal Mystery cycle for our spiritual health. It is the only way to touch into mysticism. We recall Medaille’s words in an outburst of enlightenment: “Grant that in this stripping away and this dying I may be an eternal holocaust in the presence of your supreme majesty, and that wholly consumed and emptied in you, I may be nothing and effect nothing of myself.” (Maxims, Part 2, Chapter 1) Medaille is confident we can reach this higher consciousness here and now. So let us strive to be mindful in the present moment and generously make acts of self-emptying love whenever necessary. Then experience the ‘fullness of God’ that makes us come truly alive.

Can you share a story of this ‘fullness of God’ ...?

Now, my dear sister/brother, is not all of this found in a marvelous manner in the Eucharist? What is more humble than our dear Jesus in this mystery? What more modest, more compassionate and gentle, more simple and open, more filled with God and empty of all else!

28

The Eucharist presents us with the model of all the virtues of a Little Design Community. Can we see these alive in us today? Can it be said of me as it is of Jesus? Am I...

humble modest compassionate

gentle simple open

filled with God

It may be helpful to recall here what classical theology teaches about the meaning of the word ‘virtue’ in its pristine essence. Virtues are ‘energies’ and reflect our ‘participation in the life of God’. It is from this divine life flowing within us that we draw the potential for the sanctification of our own soul. It is the Divine inner ‘energizing’ that motivates and inspires us to work for the sanctification of others and encourage them along in the mystical Way. It is divine Love’s activating and co-creating power that urges us on in spreading the good news of this Little Design movement throughout the world. It is all God’s activity. It is God’s creation and we are simply the instruments ... humble, open and receptive.

And we know now that we must live out this grace in the ordinariness of our daily lives. As we go through our struggles and joys, we will be energized by these inward ‘virtues’ and limited only by our human weakness. Nature and grace are always commingling. How admirable these virtues when we see them manifest in our members – humility, compassion, gentleness simplicity, openness, modesty.

Lovely to behold!

Recognize the ‘graced energy’ working in a situation in your life now.

There, my dear sister/brother, is the model of the Virtue of our Institute.

29

Father Medaille concludes this section with the statement that the Eucharist is the model of all the virtues of a Little Design Community.

Can we see these virtues alive in us today?

“When we reflect on the love in the Eucharist, we are speaking of what is at the heart of Eucharist, the complete gift which Jesus makes of himself to the Father, and to us, out of love. For Medaille, this is the ultimate of loving. Here we have an exchange of Love, a mystery of love. So he calls us to see in the love of the Eucharist, the model of our love of God and neighbour. The Eucharist reveals to us our own vocation. We discover ourselves as a community of persons, united in the action of the Holy Spirit and called to participate in the loving operations of the Eucharistic Jesus. The charism, the grace of active and inclusive love, conforms us who receive it, into the likeness of Christ in his relationships with his Abba and all of humanity and in a special way with those in need.

It is an incarnational grace, rooted in flesh and blood, lived out in daily pain and pleasure, energized by human passion and limited by human sinfulness.” (Notes by Sr. Monica Hartnett on the Eucharistic Letter)

How do you experience this ‘exchange of love’ in your life?

It seems to me that we also find in this adorable mystery its nature and its activities.

30

Father Medaille is consistent throughout the Eucharistic Letter that all the aspects of the Little Design communities are integrated and united and flow from Eucharist.

Notes from Marius Nepper, SJ and intercongregational research team:

“It’s nature.” Father Medaille is going to give a fairly concrete description of the way the first community of the Institute is set up, such as it actually was then or such as it exists sketchily in his imagination. It is in this sense of concrete realization in which the spirit of the Institute will be incarnated that we must understand by this word, “nature.”

“The activities.” These are charitable activities toward which the Institute will be oriented; Father Medaille does not determine them with precision; he is content, in The Letter, to give the general principle to which they ought to remain faithful.”

We cannot help but marvel once again as he makes the profound Mystery so ‘contained’ in our ‘little nothing’, in our small groupings, in our human existence.

Medaille had a great sense of himself being changed into Love. In his reflection on the Eucharist he writes:

*O Jesus!
in this miracle of mysteries
effect in me a miracle of love.
Grant that when I have the happiness of partaking
in this sacrament,
Your grace may change my life into your life.”*

Observe how ‘open to the Spirit’ this Little Design remains.

The nature of our Institute presupposes a secret association of three persons living together in the same house, all brought to perfect unity by detachment from everything that they might have of their own, all united to God by secret vows, all committed to the advancement of the glory of God and the sanctification of the dear neighbour.

In this section of the Eucharistic Letter Father Medaille uses the terms: “secret association”, “secret vows,” “secret intimacy” and “secret consecration”. What does all this mean?

Since he uses this word ‘secret’ to describe the unity of the Three Divine Persons and the consecration of Jesus for all humankind, and he also uses “secret” for our association and vows, it would seem to indicate that he means us to understand this Little Design community in a spiritual, mystical context, not literal. Hence, there will be no need for a public ceremony of witnessing the newcomers entering into these Little Design communities. To be authentically called into this little way, there will be no candle ceremony, no signing on to any handbook of criteria and no fanfare. This always has been expressed as ‘right on’ for those who have been walking in this way for some time now.

The birthings of these small faith communities are modeled on the Trinity. These ‘groupings of men/women share an interiority and a quality of loving that flows from their communion at the Divine Source. Their human relationships – marked by unity, materially detached from everything and committed to serving others - is all possible because of the personal contemplative relationship each one shares with the Two Trinities – the Trinity of Heaven and the Trinity of Earth. (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and Jesus, Mary and Joseph.)

Pere Medaille speaks of ‘a secret association of three persons living together in the same house.’ This living together model of a Little Design Community could possibly emerge today also if that is what the persons feel called to ... but a loose association of men and/or women gathering in each other’s homes regularly will most likely be the more common expression of the Little Design Communities. It becomes remarkable to witness how the unity and bonding just happens when there are these regular HOME gatherings where deep ‘sharing of hearts’ happens among the same few persons. Trust grows. Unity strengthens. Good fruits manifest!

Share your experience of belonging to a small Little Design community?

For it seems to me that our *little nothing* has for its purpose the greater perfection of souls rather than merely their salvation.

32

Rather playfully it seems, our dear Abba, refers to our Little Design as “our little nothing.” And yet, out of the littleness and mystical ‘nothingness’ of the persons who compose the community of Little Design, there will be a great thrust towards the sanctification of a great number of souls worldwide.

Jesus made a perfect consecration of himself to his Father in his sacrifice in order to make the way of sanctification open to all. “I consecrate myself (or I sacrifice myself) in order that they also may be sanctified in truth.” (John 17:19)

The Sacrament of the Eucharist, has an ‘efficacy for the advancement of the glory of God and the salvation of souls,’ and is a perfect model of the goal of the Little Design communities.

There will be an overflow into some apostolic efficacy. There can be no rules or boundaries to where this Divine Love can take us, send us, move us. Love becomes visible in some actions - somewhere – somehow. Stay awake and observe the flow of grace in you and through you and beyond you... and then return to the Source...

“Love Love and let Love love through you.”

What can you say of this dynamic interaction?

O my dear sister/brother, what secret intimacy of the three divine persons do we admire in the Holy Eucharist! What solemn offerings and secret consecration of the dear Jesus for all mankind! What power this august Sacrament has to advance the glory of God and the salvation of souls!

How beautifully Medaille uses ‘secret intimacy’ to describe the unity of LOVE in the Three Divine Persons all present in the Eucharist. Can we ever comprehend the mystery animating this offering and consecration of Jesus for all humankind unfolding in Eucharist? And recall how Father Medaille also uses “secret intimacy and secret consecration” for all our Little Design communities. All this points to a form of community whose essence is mystical and yet its efficacy manifests among the people. It’s Love and Love overflowing creating triangles of Love - all to the glory of God.

It is well known that the mystic soul keeps the “secret to myself.” There is a substantive “knowing” that frees the person from rationalizing, justifying or defending one’s lifestyle and choices. The interior conviction sustains throughout whatever the cost. Mystics don’t often do a lot of talking. They live and breathe and move in God ... and smile a lot. They know what they know they know. Do you find yourself becoming a little more ... a silent, prophetic witness of Truth and Love?

A theologian of our era, La Cugna, has written, “In God’s Design, God is in us, we are in God and all of us are in each other.” It is all one embrace of Love. Loving for the sake of those loved is what God is all about; it is what Eucharist is all about. We are made in God’s image and we are all to be about the same loving. God is seized with love for us and it is this seizing love that enables us to be a presence of love. We live and move and have our being in the Mystery of God’s ecstatic love for us. Love holds us, embraces us, encourages us, lifts us up and enfolds us. God in us, we in God and all of us in each other!” Wonderful good news ... may we all be one.

Could every experience of the Eucharist be our saving ‘power’ as Little Designers to advance the glory of God and the transformation of humankind?

Can YOU participate more consciously in that loving power at/in Eucharist?

Now our little community must communicate itself: first and foremost to sixteen persons in honour of the twelve apostles and four evangelists invoked in the litany of the saints; secondly, to the seven persons dedicated in a special way to the service of mercy and charity; to the seventy-two others who become involved through the efforts of the above-mentioned sixteen and seven. The number seventy-two is arrived at the following way: the leader of the twenty-three is given responsibility for winning six souls for God and for their own sanctification, while each of the remaining twenty-two is to win three souls each, taking care to attract, instruct, and lead them to the practice of deep holiness.

Here we have such a unique and rather brilliant multiplication style for communicating the vision. Fr. Medaille reminds us that diaspora methodology still works. The spirit of the dispersion and growth and spread of The Little Design vision is to be modeled on the charismatic energy of the early Church. What we are communicating is Love – and a way of Love – in a world and a culture that in many ways has grown deaf to the Gospel through secularism and materialism. Yet we know mysticism has surfaced from its underground stream once again in this era. There are many persons awakening to the God of Love and Light and are looking for a way of life that is simple, hidden, uncomplicated, and yet alive to Gospel values. Many are strongly motivated and desperately want a chance to respond to the challenge with like-minded others within a small faith community. It is happening in individuals, one by one. The mystical way is something that doesn't come to pass by whole groups, whole communities or by whole parishes. It is God working the transformation – person by person – in lives that are receptive and responsive to grace.

We can expect Little Design to come as a slow and gradual 'gathering up' of mystic persons finding each other and then becoming the new clusters of communities – scattered here and there – in and around our towns and cities - and all is happening simultaneously all around the globe. Check out our online Communities of Little Design interacting and interconnecting. Pause and marvel at the wisdom and miracle of all this. The extending of the Gospel message was done by disciples working in pairs of two, going from town to town. That is how the message of Jesus reached the four corners of the earth. Observe how Little Design wants to 'get moving'.

We are called to be these 'mystic-missionaries' today... go and do likewise:
Attract others - by the way we live our lives.
Educate others - with the truth of our own lived experience.
Lead others - to gather and share hearts in small faith-based communities.

In this manner, my dear sister/brother, the Eucharist was communicated to the apostles, then to the seven deacons and to the seventy-two disciples, in order to be widely diffused by their efforts and communicated to all the rest of the faithful.

Father Medaille relates our style of communicating the Little Design vision to the manner in which the Eucharist is distributed; that is, in an intimate, personal way. His references to the 12 apostles, the 7 deacons and the 72 disciples remind us of the diaspora of the early Christian communities. Father Medaille is hereby empowering these small Little Design groups to be involved in the apostolic mission of the Church. The Trinitarian Love within each member overflows to others and soon we are immersed in a participation in the universal mission of the Church founded on Pentecost.

Medaille, not only launches the VISION, he indicates here in the Letter, that he sees how there will be a need for a constant growing number of persons within the Body being called forth and delegated to communicate this Little Design way of life to others. Holy Communion is distributed to one person at a time and so, the teaching and the understanding and the feeling for The Little Design, must be communicated just like that ... personally, intimately and with the deep desire and intentionality, just as when one is being offered the gift of LOVE in Holy Eucharist.

*Is there a spark of a new fire of Pentecost here? Can we see Little Design communities as a Pentecostal gift to the world in our time? How are you being called to communicate this Little Design Community to those around you? This requires nothing lofty or grandiose in evangelization. It requires care and discernment. You will recall that you are to **'invite 3 persons'** for whom you already feel some spiritual attraction. What a simple and remarkable Little Plan. We set out now to communicate this great Love. This mission – this profoundly relational charism – has within it, its own innate potential for growth and expansion and fruitfulness. It is God's LOVE that is being communicated, shared and celebrated between all the 'personal triangles'. It is agape intermingling in all of these small communities of three to six persons and in all the global networking of these pockets of faithful disciples amongst themselves and with each other. So no one person needs to be overwhelmed by this responsibility. No one person needs to carry the weight of leadership or formation. It just does not and will not happen within this paradigm. We are a community of 'great lovers of God'. We profess to be a 'congregation of God's Great Love' mixed in, like leaven, with the dough of the world. There is no hierarchical ordering of persons, only the inclusive love that binds us together as a Mystical Body of Christ.*

In our Institute, with the help of God, the food will be extremely frugal and the clothing simple. There will be this distinction, however, that the use of food and clothing will be determined by each group according to the different circumstances of each.

36

Only now, in paragraphs 36 -38 does Father Médaille come to the practical points that will distinguish these Little Design communities. This is because they - the externals - are less important and will now be more easily embraced because of the whole new VISION Father Médaille has been outlining.

Once again, we see how the ‘exterior’ manifestations are nothing more than an indication of the interiority of the person living and embracing this way of life.

So our food, “frugal” and our clothing, “simple” suggests that we purchase just enough groceries weekly for our personal or family consumption. We must strive to be always about living on ‘just enough’ food and clothes. It means living a lifestyle that resists hoarding and stockpiling, rejects any feeding off consumerism and its subtle push, drive, to have more, buy in bulk and save etc.

Doesn’t this ‘frugal’ fit our era of ecological responsibility and sustainability? Most mature adults today are appreciating the delicate and fragile structure of the food chain. Everything about our choices matters to the whole planet. Our outer actions reflect our interiority and intentionality. Spirituality drives the new consciousness!

And let us always be mindful of the ‘distinction’ that each small Little Design community will determine its own expression of this simple food and clothing style. There is a unity within this kind of diversity that allows for maximum freedom of Spirit. This announces quite a radically new understanding of ‘community’ without using a ‘common dress’ or sharing a ‘common life’ as the distinguishing characteristic of its purpose and mission.

What speaks to you?

Have you thought about your food and clothing choices lately?

This, my dear sister/brother, is what we observe in the species of the Holy Eucharist. These are very common, but nevertheless they allow for differences in taste and colour according to the different kinds and quality of flour used.

37

Father Médaille wants the Little Design communities to be - adaptable, free, without uniformity, simple - as the great mystery of Eucharist is throughout the world. These core essentials of life - food, clothing, and houses - are to indirectly declare who we are interiorly - great lovers of God. The externals of our Little Design way of life should reflect the authentic reality of our interior 'be-ings' and not create a distraction by any excessiveness.

Father Médaille celebrates the diversity and various expressions of how this might evolve. There can be many expressions of these external practicalities – clothing, food, homes - according to what is fitting and appropriate in the various cultures and climates... wherever Little Design communities spring forth.

Just as the Eucharist is celebrated with hosts made from varying flours according to what's available in different countries, so will the Little Designers, wherever they live, express their lifestyle in a manner that is suitable to their age and culture and circumstances.

There will be no one right way!

Do 'the bread and wine' elements of your life reflect this Eucharistic Love?

The houses of our sisters/brothers should be, like the tabernacle, always locked, and the sisters will leave them only through obedience and to return without delay, and only in order to devote themselves to activities which advance the glory of God. Do we not see this clearly in the Holy Eucharist!

Our houses should be like tabernacles. What a beautiful image of “home.” The Little Designers are invited to create and care for their own homes/condos/apartments as sacred spaces. This ensures their interior contemplative lifestyle and honours the Presence within.

Their movement out into the neighbourhood or workplace is once again through an obedient listening to God’s prompting them to go forth to perform some service for another and then return home. Father Médaille makes the association with Jesus abiding in the tabernacle at the altar of repose, when the tabernacle door is locked. Jesus is truly present when he is in the tabernacle and we can come to our chapels and churches and visit and adore and rest awhile before the sacramental Presence. During the liturgy, or when there is a need to bring communion to the sick or dying, the tabernacle door is opened and Jesus is carried to the person in need of receiving the gift and comfort of Holy Communion. There is a time for the door being locked and a time for the door being opened. Once again, it is a ‘coming in and a going out,’ a flow of contemplation and action. It is all ONE - this ministry of Love.

To cherish our contemplative life it will always be necessary to safeguard periods of silence and solitude for listening to God. These ‘boundaries’ will secure our homes as sacred spaces. Father Médaille would seem to be cautioning us to be careful about our ‘comings and goings’ that can easily slip into addictive/compulsive patterns. Ministry needs to be carefully discerned so that it doesn’t become a frivolous activism. We guard ourselves from ministry burnout by modifying any imbalances in our lifestyle. Hurry, stress and over-working rob one of that lovely gentleness and peace of heart we are all called to practice.

Our homes will reflect a simplicity, a cleanliness, an order and a beauty that speak of a sense of the holy and the sacred ‘life’ that we are cherishing within ourselves and with all those who live within our homes or come to visit and be with us in our homes. All of this speaks to the many persons of our present day culture who are choosing to de-clutter, simplify and downsize with their homes and material possessions. The movement towards “little and hidden” is attractive once again.

How would you describe your home?

As to the activities of our little sisters/brothers, they will be with God's help very interior, both for their own sake, as required by their Directory, and for the manner of life they will try to inspire in others so that the whole world will strive more than ever to live for God and to serve him "in spirit and in truth".

Father Medaille, himself a contemplative soul, knows that there is only one spiritual life and there is no dichotomy or distinction between work and contemplation. The interior life of union with God of its very own nature just flows into some ministry or service. It is all the one Love and one Life. This manner of a contemplative lifestyle is in itself, a ministry to inspire and educate others so that they, in turn, can live deep and meaningful spiritual lives in the world. You will note that Medaille uses the expression, "with God's help" ten times throughout the text.

"Is this the Little Design in a Big world? When Father Medaille quotes John 4 that speaks of 'there will come a time when you will no longer worship me on this mountain or in the temple, but you will worship me in spirit and in truth,' is he being prophetic of a time when ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue will find unity in the one God?

Today as more of us are living more consciously in a global spirituality, with its emphasis on inter-dependence and inter-connectedness- Little Designers - who choose to live this way of life, can be an inspiration for others. The Gospel way of being and living grows ever more attractive and urgent in this modern era.

From Marius Nepper and the inter-congregational team:

"To be real, the interior life, the 'service in spirit' ought not to consist merely in words but should be translated into actions. For the Eucharistic soul, the interior life should demand an apostolic life in order that 'its service in spirit' become at the same time, 'service in truth'; but since the text is speaking of persons in the world, it will be important to show them that the Divine Goodness demands that they should be apostles in the midst of their daily life in a manner adapted to their state of life and their social condition."

Do it where you are!

Does 'the manner of my life' inspire others?

By serving God in spirit, we learn to live the interior life. By serving God in truth, we discover the various services required of us by divine Goodness who desires all things to be in proportion, suitable and adapted to differences in sex, rank and age.

40

The apostolic goal of ‘serving in spirit and in truth’ is seen in the way Jesus gives himself in the Eucharist. This requires an on-going discernment for each Little Designer to live faithfully the interior call of God and to do one’s own authentic ministry. Father Medaille names some very helpful directives regarding these ‘various services - that they be in proportion, suitable and adapted to the differences in sex, rank and age.’ There is a harmony and a respect for our humanness and giftedness. The apostolic mandate of each Little Designer will be perfectly tailored to his/her uniqueness.

“Try to discover how each person is drawn by the Holy Spirit and the way in which God desires to lead him/her.” (P.C. p.45)

The mention here of ‘differences in sex’ is an interesting aha! Did Father Médaille envision even then that this way of life would be suitable and attractive for men and women as individuals, as married couples, as well as for celibates and single persons? Such inclusivity and beauty as men and women come together in a variety of ways to offer services for the dear neighbour - the world. Even though, he keeps addressing them in the Eucharistic Letter as ‘my dear daughters,’ we hope he means that we women will be the ones who do the inviting, we do the including, and we do the gathering-into-relationship those men and women who are likewise seeking to live lives of deep contemplation and service. Let us move forward on this journey into ever more “Oneness.”

This manner of living in our individual homes requires a psychological maturity as well as a spiritual maturity. Each Little Designer will hopefully be growing in their awareness of their unique woundedness (as well as giftedness). There is healthy encouragement to seek recovery in those areas where we experience some dysfunctionality. The ‘communion’ of the members when they gather in their small groups of three to six persons will keep fostering healthy sharing of hearts and challenging each other to rise to ‘the more’ - more compassion, more serenity in accepting the things they cannot change, and more truthfulness in their vulnerability and giftedness.

Keep maturing and growing in all ways into Christ!

Am I living in right harmony with my inner life and outer life?

Now this is what the dear Jesus very clearly brings about in the Eucharist and in communicating himself to others through the Eucharist.

41

“This apostolic goal of the Institute, this principle of orientation which should set the course for all the activities of the Little Design, namely, to lead the greatest possible number of persons in the world to “service in spirit and truth” - the Founder did not discover this elsewhere than in the contemplation of the model, Jesus hidden in the host.”

- Nepper and the intercongregational research team

There seems to be within these concluding paragraphs such a burning zeal bursting forth. Father Médaille is emboldened to proclaim a call to action. It is a call to empower the spiritual giftedness that is rising up in our families, parishes and neighbourhoods. Awaken those leaders and prophets, teachers and musicians, poets and dreamers, lovers and youth, elders and pastors... come to the Feast of Love... come with us into the world ... for the harvest is waiting and the labourers are few. Gather up the greatest number of persons in the world to “serve in spirit and in truth.”

What an apostolate for our time. Here is the blueprint in the Eucharistic Letter for a spiritual apostolate that offers the world a simple, little, hidden and self-emptied way of life that will empower them as individuals and as small communities. As we watch them begin to manifest here and there around the world, we will observe how they will keep mutating and multiplying and expanding across and within the global community of the world. This is the greatest adventure of Love - all peoples, all races, all cultures, all nations - uniting under the banner of Love. All of us, dear children of God.

How do you experience the call to ‘the more’?

In summary, as our dear Saviour appears to us in the Eucharist as living not for himself but entirely for God his Father, and for the souls redeemed by his Precious Blood, so, my dear sisters/brothers, our little design and the persons who compose it will be nothing for themselves but wholly absorbed and emptied of self in God and for God and with that, they will be all for the dear neighbour, all for God and the dear neighbour, nothing for themselves. May God deign to accomplish his marvels according to the measure of his good pleasure.

Amen.

Blessed be God.

Jean-Pierre Medaille, SJ

In summary, Jean-Pierre Medaille pushes to the limits, one more time, **the essence** of our whole Little Design spirituality. That is, “be nothing of self, all for God and the dear neighbour.” The starting-place is awakening to our being-in-God with an awareness of the Divine Lover loving us: “Behold the Beloved beholding you.” (Teresa of Avila) Essentially, the Eucharistic Letter is saying- “Yours is a mystical vocation. It is not about you. It is about God and God working in you. It is about God accomplishing God’s dream for all humanity... and using you, using us... as instruments of that Divine capacity for loving.

He ends with “May God accomplish his marvels in us according to the measure of his good pleasure.” Clearly, Father Médaille wants to leave us with this final reminder that we cannot do this. It is the God of Love who does this life/work in us, when we allow God to accomplish his marvels. Like Mary, our souls cry out in praise: “Truly, the Almighty has done great things for me; holy is God’s name.” (Lk.2 Magnificat)

Truly, how marvelous for us today to receive this prophetic vision in such a personalized, inspired Letter from Jean-Pierre Medaille. May we resonate with its vital energy and desire to respond to its attractive way of life with courageous zeal and compassionate love. With all our hearts, we pray that we awakened ones of this generation will be heralders of this “Good News” to all the nations of the world.

What say you, now?

Is God beckoning you?

Will you come, follow the voice, and dare the journey into deeper Mystery and meaning?

Reflections