

## BLESSINGS

May 1948 editorial

(5 months after the promulgation of the Charter)

Father Caffarel wrote this editorial in response to the following letter he received from a lady commenting on a recent article he had written in "L'Anneau d'Or" (a journal on marriage that he edited). She had written:

*"I am a passive type of reader – a 'mother-of-a-family-too-busy-to-write' - but this time I reacted violently after reading your article."*

*You say in your article: 'Your absence of worry worries me.'*

*But, Father, worry gnaws at our heart. The world around us is full of poverty-stricken people, how can we feel at peace? Are there still many people who live happily, at ease within their peaceful family community where the essentials of life are not wanting, where they are surrounded by people who love one another? I really thought that this belonged to a different age. For my part, I find it so difficult to put aside a few moments of peace and tranquillity when I put my head between my hands and say to myself: 'The blessings I enjoy are willed by God; besides, am I not generous within my means etc. etc...?'. And I go back to whatever I was doing, a little reassured. ...But not for long. An appeal comes through my letterbox; I already give to several good causes. I can't give to all. But then...I think of children who are freezing in this cold weather? Mine are so happy in our warm house. Is this providential: their poverty? my relative comfort? – Everything is thrown into question...*

*Or, it could be something said by some well-known priest or a book by some famous author that comes into my hands. Poverty is there, it lies in wait for us, spoils our comfort, upsets our reasonably established views. It is no longer possible to be happy; and - what is worse - the cheque I send brings no peace at all. No, Father, help us rather to find peace: the peace that comes from charity. As you see, I am condemning myself - I know it all comes from lack of love.*

*Where do we come in, we who are so blessed, faced with this world poverty? Are not our excuses (plan of providence, etc...) futile? I often ask myself if your journal, written for us and which understands us and our problems so well, would not do better to forget all these problems of ours and, instead, give us a good shake up and preach to us about poverty, charity and the perfect love that leads one to do without things. I ask myself whether, immersed in such an intense charity, we would not see more clearly the insignificance of those marital problems that are so much on our minds.*

*We are not experts. We are conscious of being insignificant, sinners, irresolute, worried, tossed about, sad to see misery without having the courage to do something about it. Now that you have tried to worry the tranquil, could you not try to tranquillise the worried? This anguish is so heavy to bear. It would be so simple to be tranquil!*

How very Christian this all sounds!

Here we have, caught in real life, this anxiety by which one recognises Christ's true disciples. Faced with the world's misery, they become aware of how fortunate they are and ask themselves: 'why me, why not them?'

How blessed you are, you to whom I am writing these lines - even if you do not possess material wealth. You are blessed in your background, in your education, in your relatives, in your friends, in your home where people love one another. You are blessed with infinitely more precious goods: in your faith, in divine grace... And, all around you, there is terrible poverty: physical hunger, hunger of the heart, hunger of the soul.



**FATHER CAFFAREL SPEAKS TO US**



Are you haunted by these questions: ‘why me, why not them?’ Are you haunted by the will to share? Perhaps you will say to me: “They don’t come to me and ask”. Really! Do you think that it is up to them to come forward?