

## The fancy-dress ball

Lies everywhere: around us, in us.

Mrs X hates Mrs Y, but look at the faultless smile she wears to greet her. Dr A spends his time criticising his colleague Dr B, but see with what show of warmth he congratulates him on his recent success. Look at those people paying their respects to the bereaved family at the Requiem... wouldn't you be impressed by their sincerity? Lying words, lying gestures... life of lies. Everyone is playing a part - the perfect wife, the model father of a large family, the right-hand man of the parish priest, the benevolent boss, the broad-minded Christian. Make sure the mask is on straight, that the fancy-dress fits, that's the thing to do !

And what about party politics, the press, the latest strike, the big law-suit?... everywhere you look, nice words are being used to cover little bits of dirt. We get so used to it, we don't even notice it. We're so used to it, that is to say: so contaminated.

You think I am pessimistic? Then apply this test: try, just for one day, to track down all the lies that slip into your words, your letters, your gestures, your silences, your thoughts, your prayers... lies to your wife, to your children, to your fellow workers, to the people you meet, even to yourself (you can lie just as easily to yourself as to others) and to God. If at the end of such a day, you are not appalled, then you are a saint... unless you're blind. If the latter, it is very serious.

To be honest should become your daily obsession.

You will be effectively helped to that end, if you play the Teams-game loyally. If, during the Exchange of Views at the meeting, you express your thoughts quite simply, if you admit what you don't know, if you ask for answers to questions that puzzle you, if you find out with the others how you can best apply the truths you are beginning to grasp, you will soon find that you are becoming HONEST. If your prayer at the meeting is something more than a good speech, if it expresses in a few simple words, devoid of eloquence - just as if you were saying them to God alone - a thought, a wish, something you feel deep in your heart, then you will become HONEST. If you all share loyally on the obligations (endeavours), you will all soon become HONEST. Remember what the Charter says: *"Each couple says quite frankly whether they have kept, during the preceding month, the obligations laid down in the Charter"*. This should be quite normal for couples who, together and in a spirit of brotherly mutual help, have freely subscribed to a rule: the rule to tell each other of their efforts and difficulties. Why do so many couples dislike this sharing? Is it not to the extent that they are still used to bluffing, to playing a part, to maintaining their reputation?

It is precisely because - among other things - we see in this sharing an infallible way of making each of us drop his/her disguise and fight against bluffing, that we attach so much importance to it.

When couples in a team really try to do away with all lying and to aim at absolute sincerity, then, as one of you said in a letter to me, *"among Christians who have become truly open with one another, the communion of saints is not just an accepted dogma of faith, but a living experience"*.

*Henri Caffarel*