

# A LIFE, A MESSAGE



## Short illustrated presentation of the Carthusian nuns

Booklet prepared by the nuns of Benifasar (Spain) and Annuntiation (South Korea)

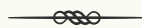
This digital version of the booklet can be freely downloaded from the website

[www.chartreux.org](http://www.chartreux.org)

D. Dysmas de Lassus

Prior of Chartreuse

21st November, 2021



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*Dear friend,*

We realise your perplexity.  
You may wonder why build a  
monastery in such solitudes?  
What is the meaning of the life of  
the nuns who live in it ? ...

To fully answer these questions  
would require a lot of time. Here,  
we offer you brief excerpts from  
the Statutes of the Carthusian  
Nuns and some illustrations about  
our vocation that will help you  
understand the mystery of our  
LIFE and grasp our MESSAGE.

*Seven stars  
light our way.*

It all started nine centuries ago:

Bruno with six companions,  
“afame with divine love”,  
left everything and withdrew into the forests of  
CHARTREUSE, in France.

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There, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,  
and learning from experience,  
they developed their own particular style of  
hermit life, SOLITUDE AND FRATERNITY  
which was handed down to succeeding  
generations,  
not by the written word, but by example.



*Other hermitages were founded in imitation of that of Chartreuse.  
(Statutes 1. 1)*

The small group of solitaries had a discreet, but attractive influence.

The nuns of Prébayon, in Provence, wished to follow the same path, and decided spontaneously to embrace the Carthusian way of life.

The Order received them in its bosom, and they became the first DAUGHTERS OF SAINT BRUNO.

It was around 1145.



*Our Fathers followed a light which came from the East.  
The nuns undertake to walk the same path.  
(Statutes 3. 2)*

Soon the sons of Saint Bruno multiplied,  
and with them the Carthusian nuns.

Several dozens of women houses  
were founded in Europe.  
Some were great places of spiritual life.

From its origins to the present day,  
the female branch of the Carthusian Order  
has accompanied the monks,  
with only a brief interruption  
after the French Revolution.



*In accordance  
with the tradition of our Fathers,  
new foundations should be made  
in isolated places.  
(Statutes 23. 18)*

We are the heiresses  
of Saint Bruno's IDEAL.

Like him  
we desire to seek God ardently  
to find him more quickly.

The location of our monasteries  
is a visible expression of our longing:

a DESERT,  
away from inhabited places  
and enclosed,  
in which everything points to GOD



*Our principal endeavour and  
our vocation are to find God  
in silence and solitude.  
(Statutes 4. 1)*

Our charism is  
the SOLITARY LIFE.

Cells and workplaces  
are arranged like hermitages.

The greater part of our life  
is spent in solitude.

In the CELL,  
we devote ourselves to recollection,  
prayer and intercession.



*It is a mistake to believe that  
one can easily attain to intimate  
union with God,  
whilst having neglected study  
of the word of God.  
(Statutes 20. 2)*

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studies...  
...fitting to our life.

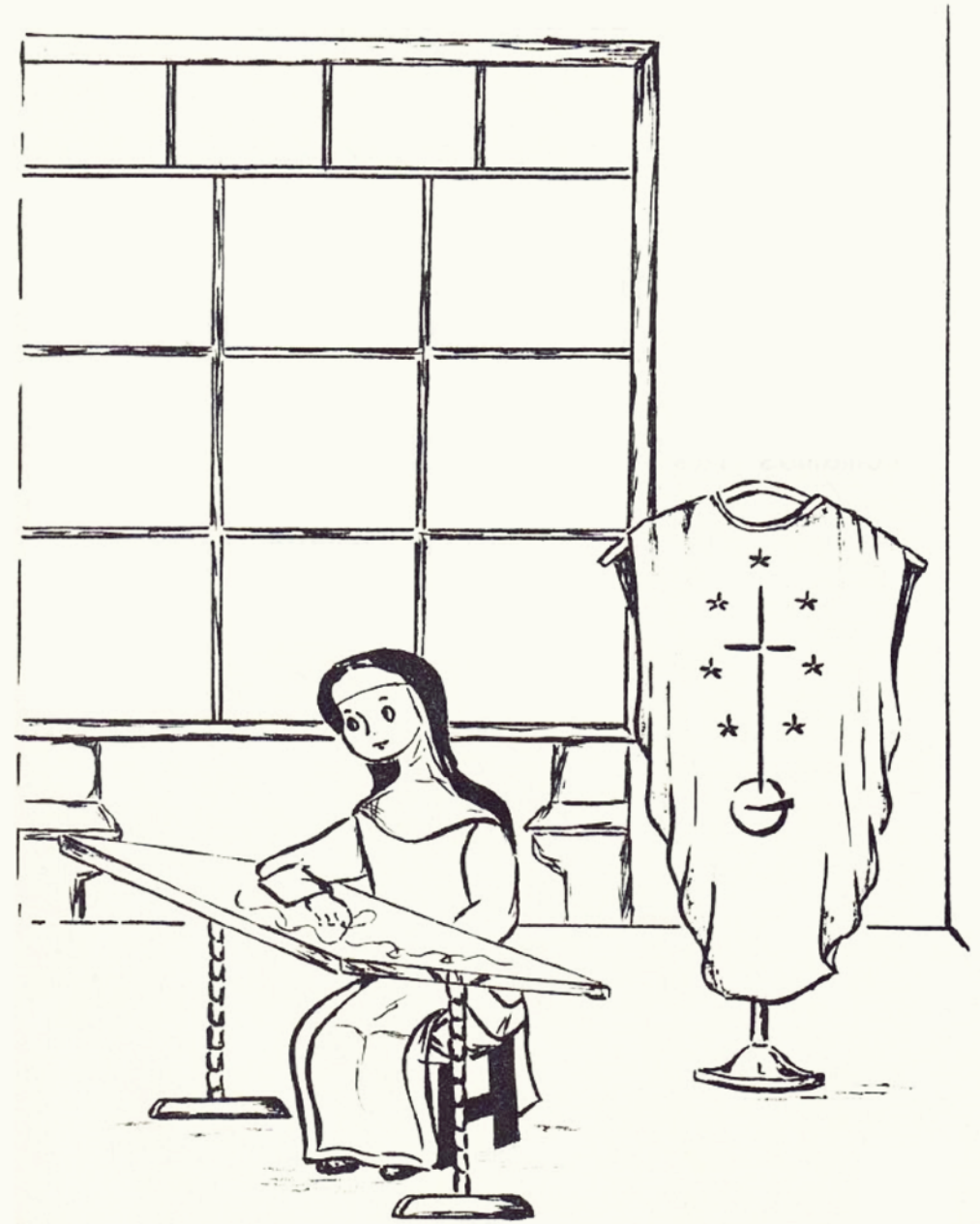




*By ensuring  
a happy equilibrium,  
work helps to profit more from solitude.  
(Statutes 20. 9)*

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...manual work ...



*According to monastic tradition,  
it is our part to follow Christ  
in his fast in the desert.  
(Statutes 8. 1)*

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...On weekdays  
we take our meals  
in cell.



*The cell is as necessary for our life  
as water is to fish and  
the sheepfold to sheep.  
(Statutes 4. 2)*

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Accustoming oneself  
to tranquil listening with the heart,  
which allows God to penetrate it  
by all ways and all means of access.



*We are resolute to joyfully  
advance together  
on the path that leads to God.  
(Statutes 26. 1)*

Bruno did not enter alone into the desert,  
but with brethren.

We, his daughters,  
are not isolated hermits.

Our monasteries are also  
places of intense  
FRATERNAL LIFE.

The sisters are united with one another  
by a same ideal  
and sustained by shared affection.



*The Eucharistic Sacrifice is  
the centre and the summit of our life,  
and the manna of our spiritual exodus.  
(Statutes 4. 2)*

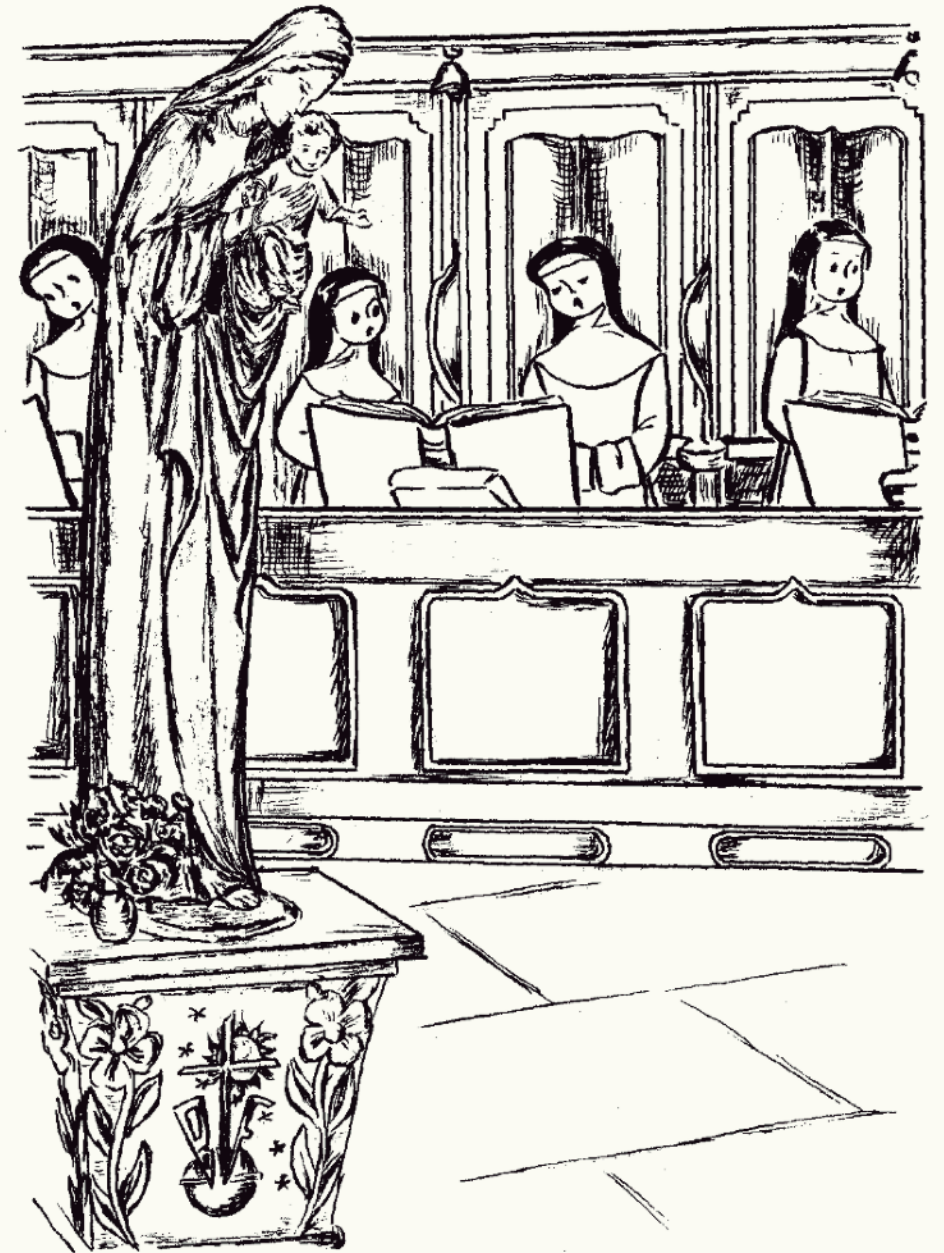


The sacred LITURGY,  
in which we take part each day,  
gives us life through CHRIST'S BLOOD  
and brings us together in one  
CHURCH.

*In the divine Office,  
the sacrament of the Word  
and the exultation of the chant  
implore on our behalf  
the silent God.  
(cf. Statutes 14. 8-10)*

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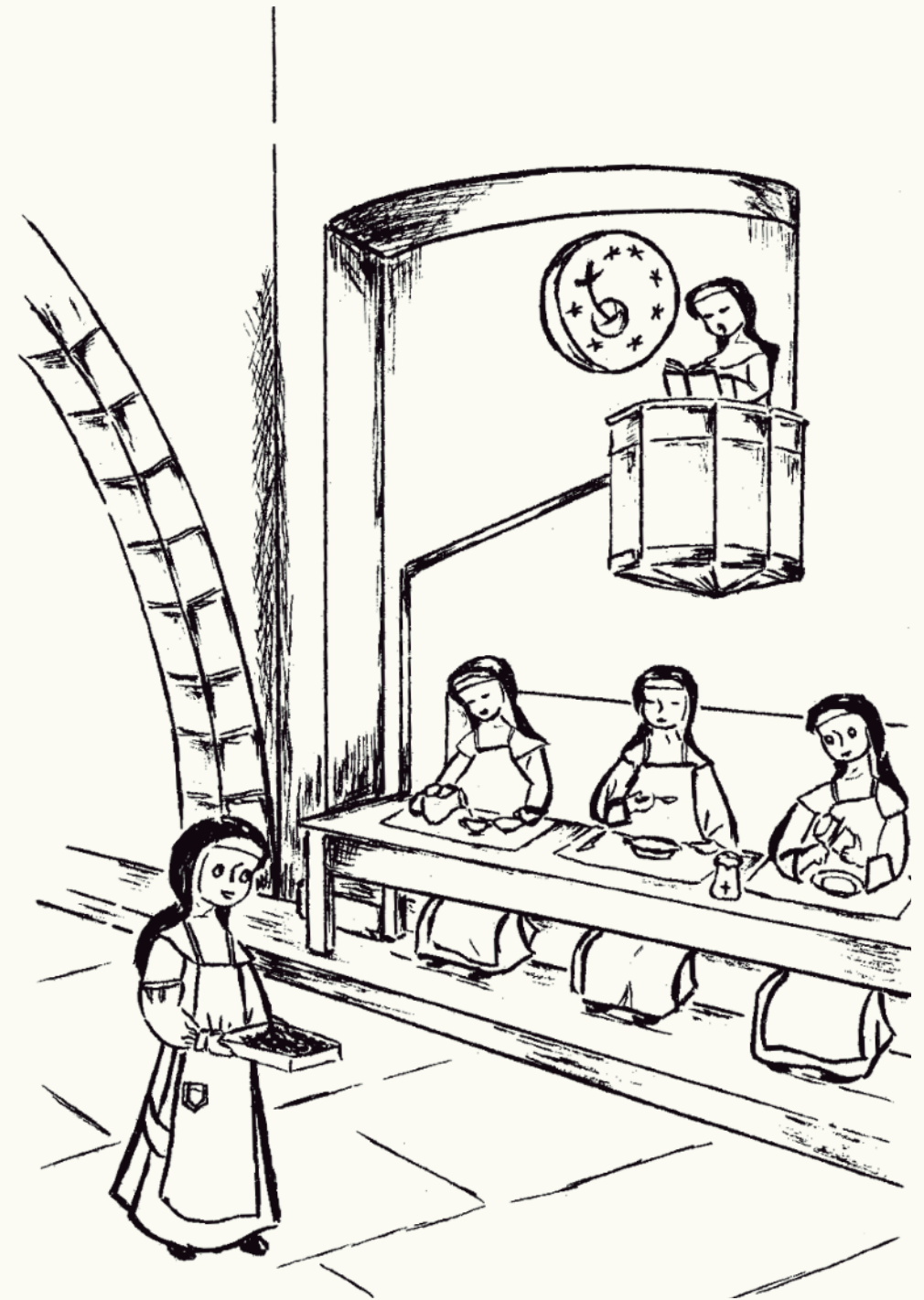
The night VIGIL,  
that we celebrate at midnight,  
and the evening praise of VESPERS  
are privileged occasions  
of fraternal gathering.



*On Sundays more place is given to  
the joy and comfort  
that family life brings.  
(Statutes 15. 6)*

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On Sundays and Feast days  
we take dinner together  
in the refectory,  
while listening to  
a spiritual reading.



*We who live in God's house  
should first and foremost  
bear witness to the love that comes from Him.  
(Statutes 29. 4)*

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...on Sundays and Solemnities,  
we have a chapter meeting  
and a recreation.





*The mind can often  
be refreshed and renewed  
by the desert's charm  
or the beauty of the countryside.  
(Statutes 15. 9)*

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...and a long weekly walk,  
contributes to mutual knowledge  
and union of hearts.



*Christ saved the human race by his prayer, above all,  
and by his immolation. In striving to share  
in this deepest aspect of Redemption  
we exercise an apostolate of an eminent degree.  
(Statutes 30. 4)*

In arriving here,  
some say,  
“Is that all the nuns do?”

“...do...”

Certainly,  
our occupations  
are multiple and varied,  
but...



*Being, by our Profession, solely turned  
towards Him who is...  
(Statutes 30. 3)*

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...does a person's value  
depend on what she 'does'  
or what she IS?

"Every soul that raises itself  
raises up the world."

(Elisabeth Leseur)



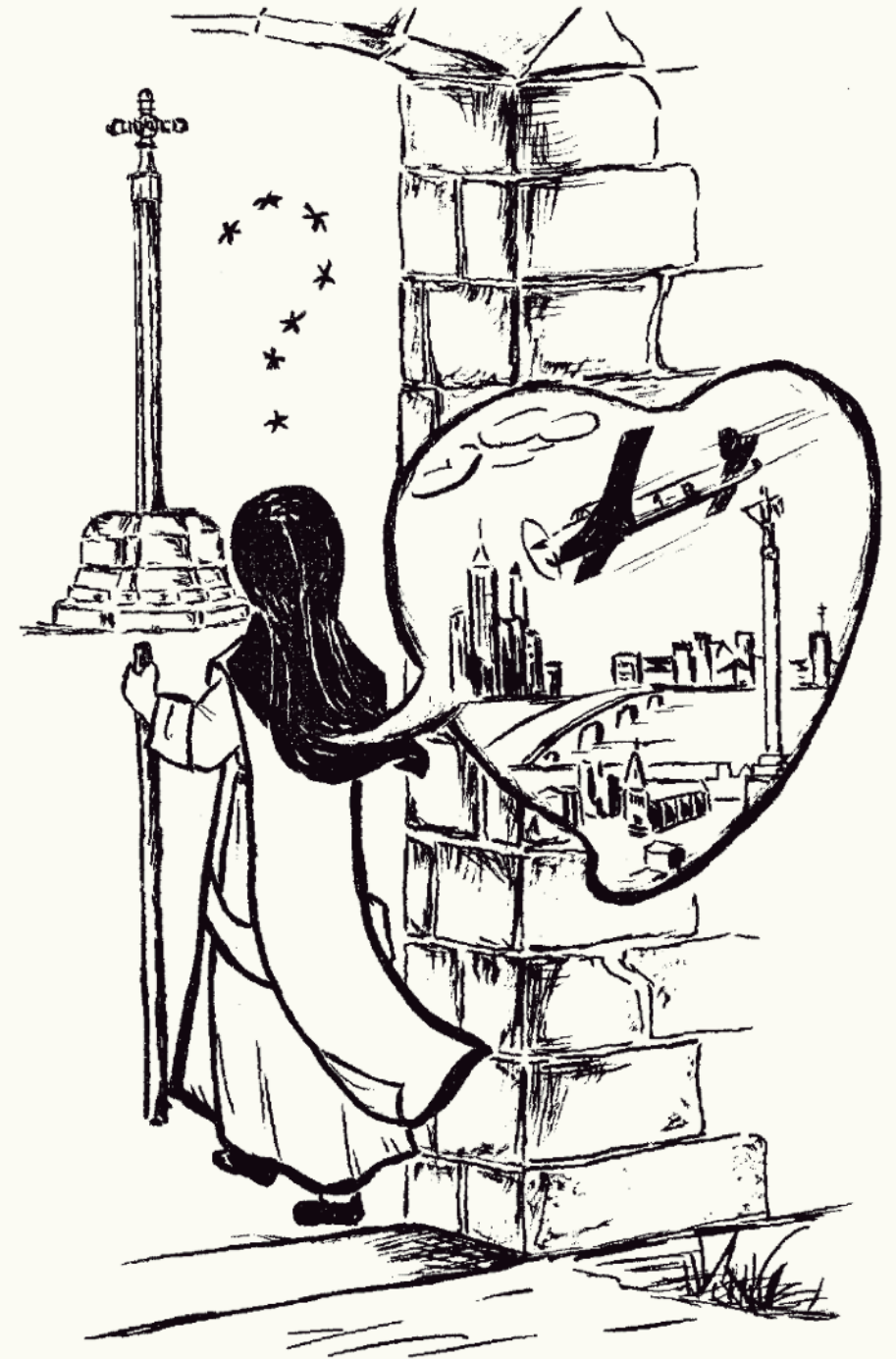
*What benefit and what divine  
joy the solitude and silence  
of the Desert bring to those who love them,  
only those know who have experienced them.  
(Statutes 30. 1)*

But,  
who can embrace such a life?  
who are these women that are in  
such monasteries?

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Well,  
we are women of our time!

we cherish the life we have left  
we have not renounced it under constraint,  
but freely,  
with the joy of having made  
a good choice.



*Intimacy with God  
makes the heart capable  
of embracing  
the hopes and problems of the world.  
(Statutes 6. 8)*

Women well informed  
about human problems,

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we know the anxieties  
and the sufferings of the world,  
and in spite of everything,  
we have the certainty  
of not having betrayed  
our brothers.

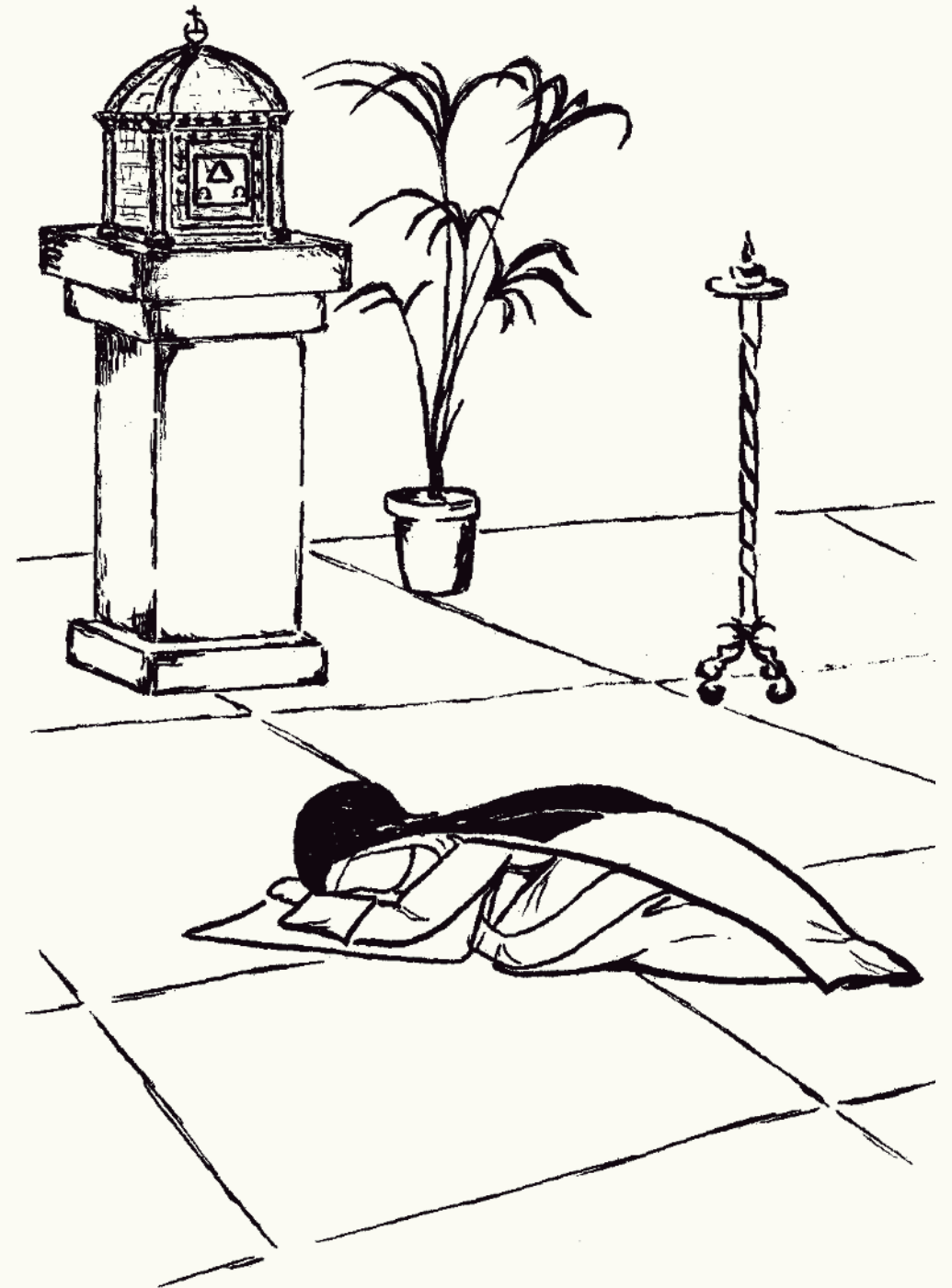


*We bear witness, before the world,  
that apart from Him there is no God.  
(Statutes 30. 3)*

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Women of our time,  
we have heard  
the same calling as BRUNO,  
about which he enthusiastically wrote:

“What is more innate  
and according to human nature  
than to love the good?  
And what is as good as God?  
Still more, is there anything good besides God?”  
(St Bruno’s letter to his friend Radulphus)



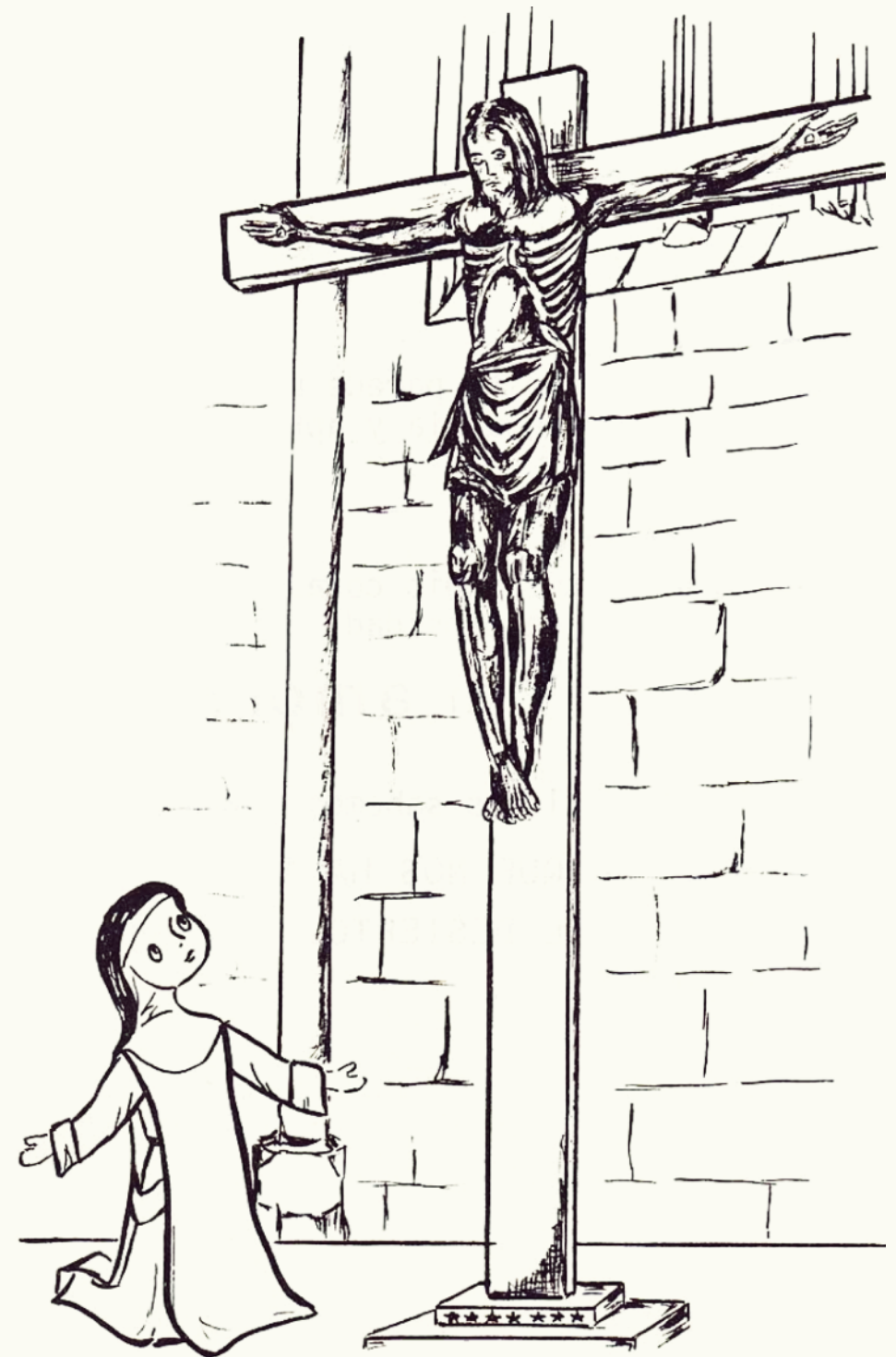
*It is in the name of all that  
we stand before  
the living God.  
(Statutes 30. 2)*

Monastic life,  
today as always,  
means choosing God.

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However, we do not desert  
the human family,  
but assume  
a MISSION of intercession  
on behalf of and in favor  
of all.

We are in solidarity  
with the entire human race..



*May each one,  
forgetful of herself  
and of what she has left behind,  
press on towards the goal.  
(Statutes 29. 3)*

If in spite of all this...  
our choice seems foolish to you,  
and you remain unable to understand and approve...

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Then, Listen:

Is not your own heart burning  
with an ideal of generosity,  
and total surrender to LOVE?

To that ideal of yours  
we feel very close:  
for it is what has drawn us  
to the desert.





*We have not chosen this excellent part  
in order to be the only ones to benefit from it.  
It is a duty we are to fulfill  
in the Church.  
(Statutes 30. 1)*

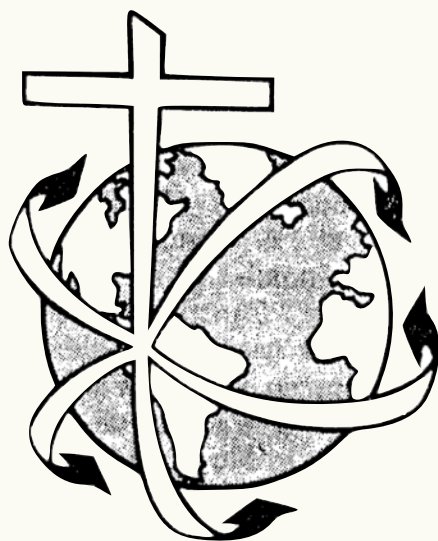
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And so, leaving you,  
we tell you with all our heart:

Keep going!  
We are always by your side.

Farewell !





STANDS THE CROSS  
STILL POINT OF THE TURNING WORLD