

Where Love gets a voice

Beloved person,

Because of the future, this weekly letter has a focused theme: being hospitable communities. Indeed, we see that the number of visitors to communities who were not yet familiar with the Apostolic Society, is growing. Fortunately, people are increasingly finding us.

Teun van de Keuken spoke in a podcast about his visit to the Amsterdam-Watergraafsmeer community. Hugo de Jonge shared his experiences with the Vlissingen community on Instagram last Sunday. Bart Budding recently told me that he always looks forward to a new weekly letter and wants to confirm his membership in the Rotterdam-Prinsenland community. Riekje van de Bank wrote about her experiences in Alkmaar:

'For quite some time now, I have been singing in the choir on Monday evenings. I feel very comfortable within the community. It is not so much that I am very religious, but what I try to be is a good person who is ready to help others and can give warmth. Who is involved with the world. I also get that warmth and feeling when I am with the choir or at a service or event. I have therefore decided that I would very much like to join the ApSoc. What step do I need to take for that?'

And Marja Timmers writes in the brochure *Together in connection*, produced by the Den Helder community:

'I found myself in a warm bath, with stories from everyday life that touched me. I was not raised religiously and yet I immediately felt at home. As a result, I went to every Sunday service since then and eventually I was no longer the outsider.'

What happens to you when you read this? Does it make you feel hopeful? Does it make you happy? Do you shrug your shoulders? Or does a feeling of disbelief or perhaps cynicism creep up on you? Are you afraid of losing something? Or do you look forward to a fresh perspective from a newcomer?

I hope the above examples show that for people who are searching for this – as Bart Budding puts it – we have 'gold in our hands'. We want to be people with integrity and hospitality. People in whom love gets a face. To this end, we create places of meeting together.

Places where we truly feel the responsibility to carry each other and patiently tolerate each other. Not for a while, but for a long time. Where we realise together that 'being loved' must come off the paper and can be felt in how we listen, speak and be present with each other.

Where - amid the hustle and bustle of daily life and our worries about the world and the Earth – our faith is strengthened in how things can *also* be done. Where we pray to each other to regain or to carefully build trust in ourselves and each other again. Where we boldly share experiences of glimmers of hope and everyday stories of love. Where we do not want to rigidly define our religious connection to the All, to God, to the Eternal, in formulas, but search again and again for what is set in motion within us, from out of that Power. Where you and everyone else is seen and acknowledged and where *this* is confirmed in every meeting. Through me, through you, through our actions.

Forming such a community with these characteristics in all its variety, is a responsibility that you may embrace. Something you can really contribute to. Our communities can break down. They can also heal, grow and be newly formed. I have heard more than once, *'It's such a relief that there are people who want to live life like me.'* So, *I wasn't crazy or too gullible after all. I just didn't know you existed.'*

I so hope that we want to practice this together, from a renewed awareness of the many opportunities that lie here. With arms as wide...

With a warm-hearted greeting, gladly your sister
Nanda Ziere



We remind ourselves of the many baptismal promises made