

Reflection Thursday Week 19 – St Clare 2022

Saint Clare (1193/4 - 1253) was born in Assisi and came under the influence of Saint Francis. She left home at 18 and, under Francis's guidance, began a community that eventually become the Poor Clares (she was later joined by her sister and her widowed mother). In its radical attachment to poverty, the Rule of the order was much more severe than any other order of nuns. In 1215 Clare obtained from the Pope the privilege of owning nothing, so that the nuns of the order were to be sustained by alms and nothing else. Such a rule was (like the Franciscan rule) both a challenge to established structures and a risk to those who followed it, and successive Popes tried to modify it. In 1247 Pope Innocent IV promulgated a new Rule that allowed the ownership of communal property: Clare rewrote it. A later attempt at mitigation in 1263 partly succeeded (after Clare's death): some communities followed the old, strict rule and some followed the new. Clare was a noted contemplative and a caring mother to her nuns. She died in Assisi in 1253.

Like the Psalmist and like Clare we, too, call upon God to show us the path of life, the fullness of joy in God's presence, because at God's right hand there is happiness for ever. The path that God calls us to follow may not be the same as that of Clare but it is still a path that leads to heaven and, like Clare, we must try to inspire and invite others to accompany us along the way.

"O light of revelation when dawn shows its face, and when the shades of twilight enfold me, may I receive the peace that comes from being in communion with you. You are a window to the eternal, hold me in your view. Don't let me ever out of your sight. Death will hold no terror for me, sheltered under your wings. May I rest in peace in life and in death." Sr Macrina Wiederkehr.

Eleven people were hanging on a rope under a helicopter, 10 men and one woman. The rope was not strong enough to carry them all, so they decided that one had to leave, because otherwise they were all going to fall. They weren't able to decide which person would make the ultimate sacrifice until the woman gave a very touching speech.

She said that she would voluntarily let go of the rope because, as a woman, she was used to giving up everything for her husband and kids, or for men in general, and was used to always making sacrifices with little in return.

As soon as she finished her speech, all the men started clapping their hands.