Solitude and prayer

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http://deposito.qumran.it/biblioteca/chartabibliae/details/df48187e30f1cedfc8934d1779ea0878.jpg
the Deposition, brick bas-relief, detail
...the fruitful solitude of the only love, that of Christ...

Brother, sister, the first reality you discover when you enter the community is solitude. Before, you formed your relationships freely and spontaneously; in the community, your ties with people are based only on the same vocation. You have not only given up marriage, you have also accepted the fruitful solitude of the only love, that of Christ. Avoid compensating for the sacrifice you have made with specific attachments. The solitude of celibacy is also a way of living in solidarity with all who are forced to live alone, without family or friends, marginalized by everyone.

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Devote yourself to the art of discerning the divine presence and become a witness to this presence; learn to pray to your Lord without ceasing. Do not value anything above the love of Christ! Christ is also in you, and in prayer you will find his presence in you. If you truly want to live in the presence of God, your prayer should be silent, personal, and hidden, according to the example given to you by Jesus.

(Rule of Bose 9; 19; 2; 36)

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painted stone outside the door of the small chapel at Bose
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...pray to your Lord without ceasing...

As we have seen, the daily life of the community is based on prayer and work. In addition to community prayer, *personal prayer* is fundamental to monastic life. An essential moment of personal prayer at Bose is *lectio divina* based on the daily Bible readings, in which each brother and sister reads, meditates, prays and contemplates the Word of God under the guidance of the Spirit. In *lectio*, Biblical commentaries, such as those of the fathers of the church, can help one perceive the unity of the two Testaments and understand Biblical prophecy and its christological fulfillment, but it is especially important to pray the Word, to make it the essential site of one's obedience.

Personal and community prayer converge in the Eucharist, the prayer of prayers, celebrated every Sunday and Thursday and on feast days.

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stone altar in the small chapel, the first church at Bose
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In preparation for the Sunday *Eucharist*, everyone attends a Saturday evening prayer vigil, in which a moment of *lectio divina* allows the community and guests to reflect together on the message of the readings offered by the church for the day of the Lord. The liturgy of the hours and daily *lectio divina* are the central elements of the prayer of the community, and each brother and sister continues his or her own prayer in silence and solitude.

Solitude is an essential aspect of celibate life, but it is just as important – in fact, absolutely necessary – in community life. It is an expression of simplicity, a way of living authentically in the community without imposing one's presence on others. Solitude also allows the members of the community to pursue together a deeper communion in God through prayer, which transforms and makes fruitful every moment spent in solitude.