

Dear Everyone,

We have tried with a small group in the Netherlands to put together what Pater van Ginneken has ever given as "definition" of the Grail. Of course that has never been a definition in the strict sense of the word, but nevertheless there are a number of pronouncements, directives, which all together give a clear and original picture of what Pater van Ginneken has meant. Here they are, given in the literal text from his conferences!

"The Grail is:

- a conscious conspiracy of all with all in Jesus Christ;
- an ever-growing community of sacrifice for the conversion of the world in a short time;
- a women's organization carried by a fervent nucleus knit together and intertwined, nucleus and periphery, each in its own place for the service of God;
- a pack of beautiful hounds together with the Heavenly Hunter in pursuit of souls;
- a common striving after a high and far-removed spiritual good, as Parcifal, the pure fool;
- The Grail exists to bring about the spirit of early christianity, an extreme Catholicism of: loving the cross, sacrifice and humility;
- The Grail means: with thousands to give to the world an example of the spirit of the radiant cross;
- The Grail must not preach, must not give lessons; The Grail must live - teach to observe all that Jesus has taught;
- The "For-God-Movement" is something beautiful, but what I intend with the Grail is a "For-All-Saints-Movement"!
- The Grail is a new force for the conversion of the world through the fulfilling of the task of the woman, and that: well organized."

Ten formulations, inspirations, images, which provide more than enough material to think over and to see it before you! Are they not magnificent together?

Dear everyone, I think that probably all of us will have the same reactions to these "definitions", namely: enthusiasm for the greatness and richness and the deep spirituality in this vision, and regret that we still accomplish so little of this in practice!

Yes, let us admit it honestly and humbly to ourselves: we are not yet anywhere near the greatness and grandness which has been meant by this inspiration! Or rather we are only a very, very little step along the way.

It is still only a little conspiracy of very few with very few - it is a community of sacrifice in bud, and the growth must become much deeper and more real - the firm joining together, intertwined with one another, each in her own place, is often still a seeking and... colliding! And when we think of that magnificent image of the Heavenly Hunter: there are certainly some among us who every day again, with real deep zeal and ardour, go out with Jesus to the people, in great openness and love for all. But is that number not still too small and too shaky?

I do not want to be pessimistic or sombre, dear all of you, I only want to say how magnificent it can become if we give a CHANCE to all those little elements, to all those little sprouting seeds among us!

And I want to point out the task of the Leaders in this process of growth. But let us first look at these definitions from another angle.

This may be the place to tell you, confidentially, that we have talked over these "definitions" with several great theologians, friends of the Grail, who form a kind of study group here in Holland to help us to formulate and make more clear the theology on which the Grail builds its apostolate and its whole being. One of these theologians, Monsignor Willebrands, after first having deeply enjoyed Pater van Ginneken's formulations! - began to undo these from their figurative language and to seek for the definitive elements in them. In this way he came to the following seven elements, which we then should see as essential in the Grail:

1. the apostolic idea (there is spoken of the conversion of the world, of going hunting for souls!)
2. the community idea (there is spoken of a conspiracy, a pack of hounds, a striving together)
3. a strong organizational element in this community (there is spoken of an organization, joined together and interlocked)
4. a dynamism (there is spoken of a hunt, a seeking, a striving, a movement, a pushing, of thousands, a continual growing)
5. the idea of sacrifice (there is spoken of a community of sacrifice, example of the cross, humility)

6. an accent on the woman (there is spoken of a woman's organization, task of the woman)
7. the idea of urgency (there is spoken of the conversion of the world in a short time)

So, in the foregoing, we have the same thoughts as those of Pater van Ginneken, but formulated in another way. After thinking about it, I would like to add another element which Pater van Ginneken always stressed:

8. the personal bond with Christ (there is spoken of: everything with Jesus, with the Heavenly Hunter)

Could we think this over quietly, and look at the two formulations next to each other, to grasp their inner meaning?

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And then: OUR TASK!

As Leaders it is our particular charge to carry the Grail in its totality, to inspire and to build up. As Leaders then we must work together to maintain these elements in the whole Grail, namely:

- to keep the apostolic idea alive,
- to build up the community spirit,
- to take care that the organization works well,
- to stimulate the dynamism again and again,
- to try and live the spirit of the cross consistently,
- to study and bring forward the role of the woman in a special way,
- to keep alive the sense of urgency in the apostolate,
- to cultivate intensely our personal bond with Christ.

Dear Everyone, let us understand it well: the whole Grail must be characterized by these elements, in every team, in every member all this must live, according to the measure of each one's situation and possibilities, - but for the Leaders it is a responsibility to renew this and to stimulate it in a special way, called as we are to total dedication and undivided readiness and so being a guarantee and a pledge for the whole.

So if it is our most holy wish to fulfill our vocation, then let us begin this month by surveying together once again the elements of

our vocation. Let us try in every centre, in every team, to make it concrete together. I cannot do that in a general letter, that must be done in each place. Perhaps in the course of the year we can take up each of these elements in turn and illustrate it with more concrete examples and suggestions. But let us begin with this whole picture, so that we can see before us again all the beauty and greatness and richness of our vocation.

And above all let us realize deeply that we must keep these elements alive together. Not every one of us can possess and radiate all of this to perfection! We must not demand that of one another. But we do all contribute something and we complement one another. And ... let us appreciate especially in the other that in which we ourselves perhaps are weak.

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A little story to end with: When Trees van Voorst tot Voorst and I returned from Portugal last March, two Portuguese Grail members were travelling with us, and in France we made a short detour to go to Chartres. I shall never forget the face of our Helena when we had entered the Cathedral of Chartres and were letting the splendour and the lustre of the centuries-beautiful windows sink into us. She stood there, still, looking towards the rose window that hung burning in the northern wall glowing in a thousandfold sparkling colors. Then suddenly she turned to me, with eyes in which that whole window was shining: "That is how the Grail must be!" she said intensely, deeply moved.

"Yes, child," - I had to think then - "you in the youth of your vocation have understood it by intuition, no by the grace of Our Lord Himself - that is how the Grail must be, rich, shining, light-giving, varied, a consolation for thousands who seek the beauty of God, like a rose harmoniously folded together petal in petal, like a mosaic of colorful lives, laid together to form a flaming-beautiful whole...."

And Pater van Ginneken will not hold it against us - on the contrary! - if we add to the images he has given, this new one found by one of the youngest in our community in the deep happiness of her vocation, carried away in the presence of such beauty:

The Grail is like a window of Chartres, radiant and shining, the light of God's grace playing through the many-colored lives of thousands, joined together in the firm frame of His Will.

Dear Everyone, that we indeed may fulfill our task, that each of us indeed may be a shining little part in such a beautiful compact Chartres mosaic, that is the most holy wish of

Yours lovingly in Christ,

Rachel Donders

(Excerpt from a Letter)