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Nachfolge als Teilhabe am Göttlichen – der mystagogische Weg christlicher Existenz am Beispiel Christian de Chergés, Prior von Tibhirine (+1996)

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Abstract (English)

A new hermeneutical approach is needed in theology that understands faith as man's personal and individual answer to God's call in his own life, which makes the person a witness of faith, who bears witness with his life to the truth that is quasi "endowed" to him. Such a model of exemplary Christianity is the life of Christian de Chergé, Prior of the Trappist monastery of Tibhirine in Algeria, kidnapped and murdered in 1996. The aim of this thesis is to give an insight into his life, his thinking and the motives for his actions. His theology has an extraordinary life-affirming and at the same time ascetic trait; it is completely Christocentric and yet bridges in a fascinating way in the encounter with the other, the Muslim, the gap to the "sister religion" Islam. A person who is firmly anchored in his relationship with God and lives out of it lets us sense something of the mystery called faith. The leitmotif of participation asks how God inscribes himself into human experience, even into human life itself, how he transforms the believer towards a new existence, and how his story of faith becomes a story of life and thus a living testimony of faith. The concept of participation as a paradigm of Christian existence offers an excellent access to the thinking of Christian de Chergé, as it summarizes many of his motives. His writings – sermons, letters and chapter discourses – as well as the biographical testimonies on him allow us an insight into his way of thinking and his faith, down to the motivation of his martyrdom. The individual motives of participation, which form the core of Christian de Chergé's theology and which are analysed in more detail in this thesis, are hope, faith, incarnation, the Eucharist as well as witness (martyrdom). For Christian de Chergé, the doctrine of Incarnation formed the center of his theology and spirituality. Faith was for him the mandate to implement this mystery constantly anew in his own life as an "existential transcription of the Gospel". In a time marked by exclusion and marginalization and by religiously and economically motivated violence, Christian de Chergé's testimony can show the world a faith with which boundaries can be overcome and where the experiences of hope, love and forgiveness are possible, thus opening man to the transcendent. It can become a theological model and a place of learning for people in search of meaning, truth and salvation in Christian faith, especially when experiencing religious and ideological diversity.