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Meditations: Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during this season of Lent.

03/18/2024

- Jesus is the light of the world.
- A look filled with light
- The Lord is my shepherd

I AM THE light of the world, Jesus said to the Pharisees, while teaching in the Temple. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have

the light of life (Jn 8:12). Perhaps we have sometimes become disoriented when facing the darkness of the night. Then the shapes of the objects around us dissolve, and we lose our sense of direction. But when the light suddenly returns, everything regains its clear shape and meaning.

In our Lord's words proclaiming that He is our light, we find a refuge for the moments of darkness when pessimism or sadness tries to enter. "To be sure, those who believe in Jesus do not lead lives of perpetual sunshine, as though they could be spared suffering and hardship; but there is always a bright glimmer there, lighting up the path that leads to the fullness of life (cf. Jn 10:10). The eyes of those who believe in Christ see light even amid the darkest night and they already see the dawning of a new day."^[1] —

“Stay with us, Lord, for it is almost evening” (cf. *Lk 24:29*), one of the disciples from Emmaus tells Christ. We too can often feel the need to ask our Lord not to walk away from our lives. Our doubts, wounds and worries need to be aired in the light of his loving look. We well understand that those first followers of Christ, who were walking home discouraged, realized that “amid the shadows of the passing day and the darkness that clouded their spirit, the Wayfarer brought a ray of light which rekindled their hope and led their hearts to yearn for the fullness of light.”^[2] —

THE LIGHT of Christ helps us discover the beauty hidden in the events and persons around us. Sometimes we can get frustrated when things don't turn out the way

we planned; or we give too much importance to a disagreement with a person near us; or we have the impression that society today has too many problems. For a time, perhaps we may experience our own limitations with greater force. But if we let ourselves to be filled with Christ's light, we will not only find the consolation needed to bear all this, but we will also experience that our "vision of the world deepens beyond the merely natural and we learn to grasp the positive – and, sometimes, amusing – side of things and situations."^[3]

Normally, in a newborn child it is difficult to identify the exact color of their eyes. Although they are rather greyish at first, only gradually over time do they take on their true hue. Something similar happens in our prayer. Every time we turn to our Lord, we want Him to transform our sometimes grey outlook into a

luminous and grateful contemplation of everything around us. “Let us climb the mountain with prayer: silent prayer, heartfelt prayer, prayer that always seeks the Lord. Let us pause for some time in reflection, a little each day; let us fix our inner gaze on his countenance and let us allow his light to permeate us and shine in our life.”^[4] —

On one occasion, Jesus stressed the importance of the eyes for the interior life: *The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light* (Mt 6:22). We not only want to see our Lord’s light; we also want to radiate the light of Christ to those around us. Saint Josemaría taught us an aspiration that can guide our deepest yearnings: “May I see with your eyes, my Christ, Jesus of my soul.”^[5] —

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THE LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want, the psalmist prays *He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul (Ps 22:3).* If Christ is truly our Shepherd, what darkness can frighten us? “Those who walk with the Lord even in the dark valleys of suffering, doubt and all the human problems, feel safe. You are with me: this is our certainty, this is what supports us.”^[6] —

This truth influences the way we confront daily situations. Jesus illumines the best and worst moments of each day. “This is the great light that illuminates our lives. In the midst of difficulties and our own personal failings, it encourages us to keep up our effort.”^[7] — Hence every Christian home reflects, beyond the small or great setbacks that must be faced, a deep serenity that stems from trust in God. It is the same trust that a child feels when, in

the midst of darkness, he does not allow himself to be overcome by fear because he knows his father is nearby.

“If we are souls of faith, we will give to earthly happenings a very relative importance, just as the saints did. Our Lord and his Mother will not abandon us and, whenever necessary, they will make their presence felt to fill the hearts of their loved ones with security and peace.”^[8] If ever we feel this darkness weighing on us more heavily, we can turn to our Mother like good children and, uniting ourselves to Saint Josemaría’s words, we can call on her with the certainty that she hears us: “Mother! Mummy! Don’t leave me.”^[9]

^[1] Benedict XVI, Speech, 24 September 2011.

^[2] John Paul II, *Mane nobiscum Domine*, 7 October 2004.

[3] Fernando Ocariz, Pastoral Letter, 9 January 2018.

[4] Francis, Angelus, 17 March 2019.

[5] Saint Josemaría, Notes from a meditation, 19 March 1975.

[6] Benedict XVI, Audience, 5 October 2011.

[7] Saint Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 22.

[8] Saint Josemaría, *The Way of the Cross*, Fourth Station, no.5.

[9] *Ibid.*, no. 3.