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Meditations: Monday of the Sixth Week of Easter

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during this Easter season.

05/06/2024

- Relying on the Paraclete's help
- The Holy Spirit leads us to the truth
- The gift of fortitude

JESUS promises in his farewell address to send *another Paraclete* (Jn 14:16) who will always be with us. The word “paraclete” in Saint John’s Gospel, in its Greek origin, refers to a person who comes to comfort, defend or help. Jesus announces the arrival of *another* Paraclete after He departs because He himself is the first one. Sacred Scripture tells us that Christ, now in heaven, is “our advocate with the Father” (cf. *1 Jn* 2:1). The Holy Spirit remains with us forever. He accompanies and comforts us, protects and defends us. He is the way to Christ since He reminds us of his words (cf. *Jn* 15:26), and gently and discreetly directs our hearts towards Christ. Saint Ambrose said: “Whoever becomes intoxicated with the Spirit is rooted in Christ.”^[1] —

“To teach and remind: this is the work of the Holy Spirit. He teaches us to enter into the mystery, to understand it a bit more. He teaches

us the doctrine of Jesus and how to develop our faith. Faith is not static; doctrine is not static: it grows. It grows like trees grow, always the same, but bigger, with fruit, but always the same, in the same direction . . . And another thing Jesus says the Holy Spirit does is to remind us. He will *bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you (Jn 15:26)*. The Holy Spirit is like our memory. He wakes us up: “remember this, remember that.” He keeps us awake for the concerns of our Lord and also leads us to remember our own life: “Think about that time, think about when you found our Lord, think about when you left him.”

“The Holy Spirit guides us in this memory. He guides us to discern what I have to do now, what is the right path and what is the wrong one, also in small decisions. If we ask the Holy Spirit for light, He will help

us make the right decisions, the small ones of each day and the bigger ones. He is the one who accompanies us, who supports us.”^[2] —

FOLLOWING JESUS closely leads us to want to live in the truth, to seek it with determination, to welcome and love it. To want to embrace the truth is to love Christ truly. In this endeavor, “the Holy Spirit teaches Christians the truth as the rule for their own life and shows them the specific way to apply Jesus’ words to their life.”^[3] — On at least three occasions, Jesus referred to the Paraclete as “the Spirit of truth” (cf. *Jn* 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). Even though He is another person distinct from Jesus, the Holy Spirit brings to perfection the presence of Jesus in us.

We know that “Jesus Christ is the Personified Truth who attracts the world to himself. The light that shines out from Jesus is the splendor of the truth. Every other truth is a fragment of the Truth that he is, and refers to him. Jesus is the Pole Star of human freedom. With him, freedom is rediscovered, it is recognized to have been created for our good and is expressed in charitable actions and behaviors . . . Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of the truth, draws to himself the heart of each person, enlarges it and fills it with joy. Indeed, truth alone can take possession of the mind and make it rejoice to the full.”^[4]

The love for the truth that inspires our intellect is the work of the Holy Spirit. It also fills us with humility before the created world and the reach of our own knowledge, which will always be limited compared to the mystery of God’s action. “Try to

make ‘intellectual humility’ an axiom in your life,”^[5] Saint Josemaría advised. “The desire for the truth is part of human nature itself. The truth of Christian Revelation, found in Jesus of Nazareth, enables all men and women to embrace the ‘mystery’ of their own life.”^[6]

The HOLY SPIRIT acts in the soul through his gifts, *distributing them individually to each person as he wishes (1 Cor 12:11)*. One of his gifts is the gift of fortitude, which spurs us towards great goals and sustains us in our weakness. As Saint Josemaría said succinctly: “all our strength is on loan.”^[7] We need this gift in order to seek and embrace the truth assiduously throughout our lives. Certainly this can be tiring for us, especially since our abilities are not always up to the level of our desires;

also because the truth is sometimes difficult to accept and doesn't always seem to us to be the best option. Often we will have to humbly open ourselves to other possibilities, to other ways of doing things, even though we have thought we were right for a long time.

Hence the gift of fortitude is essential for our life as Christians, since it keeps us loyal in the search for the truth. Love for the truth makes demands on every corner of our life, and fortitude gives us the firmness we need. In this way we will be able to “confront problems with courage, without fear of sacrifice or the heaviest burdens, taking on with determination our own personal responsibility.”^[8] —

Jesus says, *you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning (Jn 15:27)*. Each Christian is called to be a reliable

witness in the humble and sincere search for the truth. Christ warned his disciples of the persecutions they would undergo because of their witness. And after receiving the gift of fortitude on Pentecost, they became courageous witnesses. They were truly strong in the face of opposition, in the face of unexpected events that perhaps derailed all their plans and projects. Mary accompanies us and lovingly watches over us. She will help bring to fruition our supplication that the Spirit of truth may enlighten “our intellect and strengthen our will, so that we always strive to seek, speak and listen to the truth.”^[9] —

^[1] — Saint Ambrose, *Catechesis on the Sacraments*, 5, 3, 17.

^[2] — Francis, Homily, 11 May 2020.

^[3] — Saint John Paul II, General Audience, 24 April 1991.

[4] Benedict XVI, Speech, 10 February 2006.

[5] Saint Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 142.

[6] Benedict XVI, Speech, 10 February 2006.

[7] Saint Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 728.

[8] Saint Josemaría, *Addresses on the University*, no. 8.

[9] *Ibid.*

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