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Meditations: Tuesday of the Twenty-Fifth Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the twenty-fifth week of Ordinary Time.

09/26/2023

- The Church, Jesus's family
- Mary is "the woman of listening"
- Hearts open to God's will

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JESUS'S FAME has already spread throughout all of Galilee, and many people come to Him. Some bring the sick, while others confide their problems or ask for advice. Others probably bring their children to receive Jesus's blessing. He preaches, listens, and answers questions. Jesus cares about people. He does not shy away from their pain, illness, or distress. Every one of his days is like a loaf of bread from which a multitude of hungry hands tear pieces until nothing is left. His total surrender on the Cross was preceded by his daily self-gift to the people around Him.

One day, while many people were seeking Him, his Mother and some relatives came to see Jesus, *but they could not reach him for the crowd* (Lk 8:19). The crowd around the Master was so large that it blocked the way for newcomers. His disciples told Him: *Your mother and your brethren*

are outside, desiring to see you. And Jesus gave them a response that, mysteriously, summarizes the Good News He brought to earth: My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God and do it (Lk 8:20-21).

Perhaps the people around Him showed their surprise on their faces, but Jesus did not mean to distance Himself from his Mother with those words. Rather, He wanted to highlight his plan to establish a family united by supernatural bonds: the Church. This family would be composed of the men and women throughout the ages who would embrace his word and let it bear fruit in their lives. As a medieval writer explained: "Christ dwelt for nine months in the tabernacle of Mary's womb. He dwells until the end of the ages in the tabernacle of the Church's faith. He will dwell

forever in the knowledge and love of each faithful soul.”^[1]

“MARY REALLY is the woman of listening: we see it in her encounter with the Angel and we see it again in every episode of her life, from the Wedding at Cana, to the Cross and to the day of Pentecost... [She] does not simply say ‘yes’ but assimilates the word, grasps the word and follows it with true obedience, as if it were an interiorized word, that is, as if it had become a word in me and for me, almost a form of my life.”^[2] For example, when she prays the Magnificat, we see how well she knew the Scriptures, and how her knowledge goes deeper than the theoretical; we realize that “she identified with the word to the extent that the Old Testament words were summed up in a hymn forming

within her heart and on her lips. We see that her life was really penetrated by the word. She had entered into the word, assimilating it, and it became life within her.”^[3] —

Listening to the word of God does not distance us from the world; on the contrary, it immerses us in it, revealing the true reality of things.

"Saying 'yes' to the Lord means preparing to embrace life as it comes, with all its fragility, its simplicity, and often enough too, with its conflicts and annoyances.”^[4] — Mary lived her fidelity “in the hidden and silent sacrifice of each day [...] never amid fanfare.”^[5] — All the lives of the saints show that faithful listening is a treasure that later overflows into acts of love that transform ordinary life. Mary, a “woman of listening,” did not live an externally spectacular life. She carried out the typical tasks of any mother of her time; her whole existence was characterized by deep

docility to God's will. Her daily life, like her Son's, is joyful because she followed God's plans. She "is happy just to be there where God wants her, fulfilling with care what God wants her to do."^[6] Her desires and plans align with her Son's benevolent design. She is entirely free and at ease within them.

ST. JOSEMARIA liked to imagine our Lady recollected in prayer at the time of the Annunciation. Many painters have depicted this scene, often showing a book of Scriptures in her hands. For our Mother, reading those pages was not merely a way to recall events of the past; they contained God's words to her at that very moment. "There is no better way to pray than to place oneself like Mary in an attitude of openness, with a heart open to God: 'Lord, what you

want, when you want, and how you want.' That is, a heart open to God's will. And God always responds."^[7] —

Reading the Scriptures with hearts open to God's will allows us to discover what He wants to tell us today, in this moment. His word is always alive and effective, so we can read the same passage over and over and always find something new. Thus listening to God's word with openness helps us, little by little, to put it into practice, putting our freedom, intelligence, and capacity to love at his service. Listening and fulfilling the word of God are inseparable acts because "the word of God is truly understood only when it begins to be practiced."^[8] — We can ask our Lady to help us meditate on the Scriptures with the same openness of heart that characterized her life.

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[1] Office of Readings, Blessed Isaac of Stella, Sermon 51.

[2] Pope Benedict XVI, Address, 26-II-2009.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Pope Francis, Address, 26-I-2019.

[5] St. Josemaria, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 172.

[6] Ibid, no. 148.

[7] Pope Francis, Audience, 18-XI-2020.

[8] St. Gregory the Great, *Homilies on Ezekiel*, I, 10, 31.