

Meditations: Second Sunday of Christmas

Some reflections that can assist our prayer on the Sunday of the second week of Christmas.

- The Word has become flesh so that we can listen to Him
- Living the Gospel in our daily life
- Dedicating some minutes each day to reading the Gospels

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Jn 1:1). Today, during Mass, the liturgy proclaims once again the prologue of Saint John's

Gospel: a text so rich that it is worth meditating on it often so as to deepen our understanding of its meaning.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (Jn 1:14). All the greatness of God has been concentrated in a new-born child. God has spoken to us. He has sent us his Word; he has addressed each one of us. But his glory doesn't dazzle us; his Word is simple, humble, discreet. Those who don't want to hear Him have no need to cover their ears because the Child hardly makes a sound. He is born in a hidden stable so that no one feels obliged to accompany Him. Only those who freely wish to welcome Him will find Him.

We can ask our Lady, Saint Joseph and our guardian angel to increase our desire to draw close to this Child,

to let ourselves be loved by Him and to listen to his gentle voice. We want to be filled with the grace and truth contained in this Word. A message has been addressed to us that we wish to guard: God loves us, saves us and wants to count on us so that his love may reach the furthest corner of the earth. “Come, let us go to Bethlehem – to the God who has come to meet us. Yes indeed, God has set out towards us. Left to ourselves we could not reach him. The path is too much for our strength. But God has come down. He comes towards us. He has travelled the longer part of the journey. Now he invites us: Come and see how much I love you. Come and see that I am here.”^[1] —

GRACE AND TRUTH came through Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17), John's Gospel continues. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known (Jn 1:18). In Christ we can know God's

truth and goodness. And to draw close to Christ, to contemplate his Most Holy Humanity, to be his friend and follow in his footsteps, we need to read and meditate on the Gospel.

One day in 1931 Saint Josemaría had a surprising experience on the streets of Madrid: “Yesterday morning, on Santa Engracia Street, when I was going to the house of the Romeos, while reading the second chapter of Saint Luke, which is the one I needed to read, I met up with a group of workers. Although I was deeply immersed in my reading, I heard them say something in a loud voice, doubtless asking what that priest could be reading. And one of those men, also in a loud voice, replied: ‘The life of Jesus Christ.’ As my gospels are in a small book, which I always carry in my pocket, with the jacket covered in cloth, that worker could have given the right answer only by chance, by

providence. And I reflected: Would that my bearing and my conversation were such that, on seeing me or hearing me, people would say: ‘This man reads the life of Jesus Christ.’”^[2] —

Reading the life of Christ helps us to be in harmony with God’s will. It is a Word that never fails to affect us. It has infinite transforming power because it is alive. If we receive it, it changes us. If we welcome it, it gives us life. Saint Josemaría advised us to read the Gospel with an active attitude, in order to help the Word of God shape our daily life ever more fully. “When you open the Holy Gospel, think that what is written there – the words and deeds of Christ – is something that you should not only know, but live. Everything, every point that is told there, has been gathered, detail by detail, for you to make it come alive in the specific circumstances of your life.

God has called us Catholics to follow him closely. In that holy Writing you will find the Life of Jesus, but you should also find your own life.”^[3] —

THE TRUE LIGHT, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world (Jn 1:9). Today, led by these words of Saint John, we ask our Lord that the splendour of truth may guide our lives; that we may recognise ever more clearly that the words, gestures and actions of the Master are addressed to each one of us; that we may learn to enter into the Gospel scenes to spend the day with Jesus on his travels through Galilee and Judea. We want to witness his miracles and healings and hear Him speak about his Father’s unconditional and infinite love for us.

To enter into the life of our Lord we need to find time each day to read the Gospel. The Sunday of the Word of God has been instituted precisely

so that we may realise, once again, the great value that this Word has in our daily life. “Let us make room inside ourselves for the Word of God! Each day, let us read a verse or two of the Bible. Let us begin with the Gospel: let us keep it open on our table, carry it in our pocket or bag, read it on our cell phones, and allow it to inspire us daily. We will discover that God is close to us, that he dispels our darkness and, with great love, leads our lives into deep waters.”^[4]

Perhaps a good resolution for the year that has just begun might be to see and experience how good our Lord is through the pages of the Gospel. We ask the Holy Spirit to teach us to listen to the divine whisper there that makes us feel accompanied, inspired, understood.

Our Lady is the one who best received that Word and made it flesh of her flesh. The words of Saint John are perfectly fulfilled in her: *To all*

who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (Jn 1:12). Mary understood that this Word was for her: that day when the archangel Gabriel addressed her, and every day of her life.

[1] Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, 24 December 2009.

[2] Saint Josemaría, *Intimate Notes*, no. 521, 30 December 1931.

[3] Saint Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 754.

[4] Pope Francis, Homily on the Sunday of the Word of God, 26 January 2020.