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Meditations: Friday of the First Week of Advent

Some reflections that can enrich our prayer during this season of Advent.

- Necessity of God's grace
- God's mercy saves us
- Welcoming his mercy and spreading it

JESUS is preaching and healing the sick around Lake Tiberias. His fame has spread throughout the whole region. People are talking and asking questions about Him. Many already

consider Him the promised Messiah. One of those days, as he was leaving a town, *two blind men followed him, crying aloud, have mercy on us, Son of David (Mt 9:27)*. Surely the blind men were guided by the noise of the crowd accompanying our Lord. The crowd may have made way for them, as someone led them to the person they were looking for. Thus, when our Lord arrived at his destination, they were able to approach Him and repeat their request. *“Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.” Then he touched their eyes saying: According to your faith be it done to you. And their eyes were opened (Mt 9:28-30)*.

Like the blind men in the gospel, we too feel needy. They suffered from a severe physical limitation; we, in the intimacy of our prayer, realize that we too experience so many material and spiritual limitations. There are so many things we would like to see

more clearly. Sometimes it can seem that everything in our life is blurred. Perhaps, like the two blind men who followed Jesus, we want to cry out in our heart, asking for his help. We want to make our way through the crowd until we reach Him. Then from the depths of our soul we will implore Him for our cure, convinced of his mercy. And the certainty that Jesus hears us fills us with hope.

Christ came into the world to save us. He “is always ready to give us his grace, and especially during this season: the grace for a new conversion, for rising higher in our supernatural life; a greater self-giving, progress in holiness, that enkindles us more fully.”^[1] If we ask Him, Jesus can also grant light to our eyes.

“NOW that the time of our salvation is approaching,” Saint Josemaría said, “it is consoling to hear from the

lips of Saint Paul that ‘when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy’ (*Tit 3:5*).

“If you leaf through Sacred Scripture, you will discover constant references to the mercy of God. Mercy fills the earth. It extends to all his children, and is ‘all around us.’ It ‘watches over me.’ It ‘extends to the heavens’ to help us, and has been continually ‘confirmed.’ God in taking care of us as a loving Father looks on us in his mercy – a mercy that is ‘tender,’ welcome as ‘rain-clouds’.”^[2]

If we continually strive to get to know God better, we will have sufficient reasons to feel safe close to Him. It comforts us to know that He has come to seek us and that His favorites have always been the sick and those with big hearts, even

though their miseries were great. We are reminded of this by the words of the prophet Isaiah in the first reading of today's Mass: *On that day the deaf shall hear the words of a scroll; and out of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see. The lowly shall again find joy in the Lord, the poorest rejoice in the Holy One of Israel (Is 29:17-20).*

“What security should be ours in considering the mercy of the Lord! ‘He has but to cry for redress, and I, the ever merciful, will listen to him’ (*Ex 22:27*). It is an invitation, a promise that he will not fail to fulfil. ‘Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need’ (*Heb 4:16*). The enemies of our sanctification will be rendered powerless if the mercy of God goes before us. And if through our own fault and human weakness we

should fall, the Lord comes to our aid and raises us up.”^[3] —

JESUS heals the blind men by touching their eyes. The evangelists often show our Lord placing his hands on someone who is sick. It is a graphic sign that shows his divine power in subduing evil. God embraces and redeems all human situations: even the hardest and most desperate ones. “Our Lord’s mercy is shown above all when He bends over human misery and shows his compassion towards the one who needs understanding, healing, and forgiveness. Everything in Jesus speaks of mercy; even more: He himself *is* mercy.”^[4] —

Let us allow ourselves to be touched by God and live our Christian life with the attitude of a trusting son or daughter. We have the unshakeable certainty that our Lord “loves us, and those who love are able to

understand, to hope, to inspire confidence; they do not give up, they do not burn bridges, they are able to forgive. Let us always remember in our lives as Christians: God always waits for us, even when we have distanced ourselves from him. He is never far from us, and if we return to him, he is ready to embrace us.”^[5] —

Then we realize that, in the end, life is a continuous dialogue between our weakness and divine mercy, like that of those two blind men with Jesus. The question our Lord addresses to them is a reminder that the most important thing is our trust in Him. So we answer firmly: we do trust!

So immense was the joy of the blind men after their healing that they could not keep quiet about it. We too, on seeing the wonders that Jesus works in our souls, want to announce the goodness of our God who comes to save us. As we

consider the gift of his mercy during this time of prayer, we raise up heartfelt acts of thanksgiving. And our gratitude is also directed to our Lady, through whom our Savior came into the world.

[1] Saint Josemaría, Notes from a meditation, 2 March 1952.

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

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

[4] Francis, Message for the XXXI World Youth Day, 15 August 2015.

[5] Francis, Homily, 7 April 2013.

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