

Meditations: Wednesday of the Fifteenth Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the fifteenth week of Ordinary Time.

- God reveals Himself in Scripture
- Discovering God in creation
- Simplicity of heart

WE HAVE all been created in God's image and likeness, and we have a deep longing to be united with our Creator. Hence we seek to know Him better each day. But our intellect alone cannot grasp his most intimate mysteries. Therefore God has revealed to us these deepest truths about Himself through Revelation, through inspired writers and prophets, and above all through his own Son.

When the apostle Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, his answer was immediate: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (*Jn 14:9*). Christ is the perfect image of the Father. The invisible God who appeared in the form of a burning bush to Moses now has a human face and hands. He showed Himself as a child in Bethlehem to the shepherds (cf. *Lk 2:16-18*), and as an adolescent among the doctors of the Law (cf. *Lk 2:41-50*). His entire life is an image of

the Triune God who came to dwell among us. And therefore one of the best ways we have to come to know God better is through reading and meditating on the Gospels.

St. Josemaría said: “Whenever I preach beside the crib, I try to see Christ our Lord as a child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying on straw in a manger. Even though he is only a child, unable to speak, I see him as a master and a teacher. I need to look at him in this way, because I must learn from him. And to learn from him, you must try to know his life – reading the Gospel and meditating on the scenes in the New Testament – in order to understand the divine meaning of his life on earth.”^[1] When we read the Gospel, it is the Holy Spirit who is speaking to our soul. By showing us ever more deeply who God is, He also shows us our own deepest identity: by revealing God to us, He reveals ourselves to us.

MANY artists, consciously or unconsciously, tend to project a part of themselves in their works. In a similar way, God has left a part of Himself imprinted in creation.

“Along with Revelation itself, contained in Sacred Scripture, there is a divine manifestation when the sun shines and when night falls.”^[2]

Through creation we can come to know God better; what fascinates us when we contemplate the beauty of the sea, a mountain or a sunset, reflects aspects of the divine nature. God has given us “the ability to recognize the invisible, by identifying its traces in the visible world. Believers can read the great book of nature and understand its language (cf. *Ps 19:2-5*).”^[3]

“The whole material universe is a language of God’s love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water,

mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God.”^[4] Saint Francis of Assisi recognized this language in everything that existed. That is why his heart felt the need to thank God for all that has come forth from his hands: the sun, which illuminates our days; the moon and the stars, which teach us beauty; the wind and the clouds, which bring rain for our crops.^[5] As the Catechism of the Church teaches, “Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness.”^[6] In the book of Daniel, the three young men, when they were saved by God from martyrdom, called on all creation to praise Him: “Bless the Lord, sun and moon, praise him and exalt him forever. Bless the Lord, you stars of heaven, praise him and exalt him forever” (*Dan 3:62-63*).

“I THANK YOU, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children” (*Mt 11:25*). God wants to reveal himself to all men and women, and simplicity of heart is the best way to recognize Him. In the Old Testament, when the prophet Samuel was seeking a new king for Israel, the one chosen was David, the youngest of his brothers, whom his father did not even consider a possible candidate. When Jesus thought about who would be the pillars of the new people of God, the Church, he chose men who were not known for their wisdom or learning: almost all of them were common people who earned their living through their manual labor.

Sometimes we may be tempted to think that God chooses us for our good qualities. Besides the fact that Scripture shows us the opposite, that

God chooses precisely those who are weak, this approach is dangerous, because it cannot sustain us when we experience our own weakness. Therefore St. Paul invited the Christians at Corinth to consider the real nature of their vocation: “For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong” (*1 Cor 1:26-27*).

Jesus does not call us according to human criteria. He goes beyond appearances. He knows our defects perfectly, and asks us only for simplicity of heart. “Jesus understands our weakness and draws us to himself on an inclined plane. He wants us to make an effort to climb a little each day.”^[7] The Virgin Mary was chosen to be the

Mother of God because of her simplicity and discretion. We can ask our Lady to obtain for us a heart that is more like hers every day.

^[1] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 14.

^[2] St. John Paul II, Audience, 2 August 2000.

^[3] Benedict XVI, Audience, 6 February 2013.

^[4] Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no 84.

^[5] Cf. St. Francis of Assisi, *Canticle of the Creatures*.

^[6] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 339.

^[7] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 75.

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