

Meditations: Saturday of the Eighth Week of Ordinary Time

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

- Jesus' authority
- Trust overcomes fear
- Removing disguises

SOME OF THE Jewish authorities approached Jesus in the Temple and asked Him, *By what authority are you*

doing these things? Or who gave you this authority to do them? (Mk 11:28). Many people had seen Him cast out demons, multiply loaves of bread, and raise the dead with the power of his word. Jesus' teachings attracted crowds and resonated with the people, and the authorities wanted to know the source of his power.

Jesus' authority is primarily divine, not human: it is God the Father who anoints Him. That is why He resists the people's attempts to proclaim Him king on earth, even though the world is his. When He preaches and works miracles, He is not looking for praise. His only desire is to share God's friendship with the people; He seeks to fulfill his Father's will. This is the key to his authority.

Jesus' way of being is not like that of the scribes and teachers of the Law. They preached from the pulpit but often failed to take a genuine interest

in the people. They imposed unbearable burdens but did not lift them themselves. "The people are astonished and moved by Jesus's teaching. Closeness gives authority. Jesus was close to the people, and that is why he understood their problems, pains, and sins."^[1] The Pharisees had lost their authority because they distanced themselves from God and others. We can ask our Lord to help us cultivate this double closeness with Him and others. Thus He will be able to anoint us with his authority, which allows us to offer God's friendship to others.

JESUS' AUTHORITY is not power understood in human terms. He does not impose himself or demand respect through shows of strength. He conquers through gentle love. Especially for the people closest to

Him, like the apostles, Jesus was much more than a speaker and miracle-worker: He was the Teacher who loved them wholeheartedly. They experienced his affection and thoughtfulness, noticed the time He spent with them, and appreciated the kindness of his corrections, whenever they were needed. It is no wonder that, before ascending to Heaven, He told them: *I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends (Jn 15:15).*

This trust, confirmed with the sending of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, made those men pillars of the Church. The relationship Jesus established with each of them deepened until He had opened his heart to them completely. He knew their limitations and flaws and trusted them anyway, and his trust helped them discover what they

were capable of. Their potential may have been latent due to insecurity or fear of failure. Knowing that Christ understood and chose them in spite of their weaknesses moved them to carry out the mission of preaching the Gospel to everyone.

"God often makes use of an authentic friendship to carry out his saving work,"^[2] the Prelate of Opus Dei notes. In an atmosphere of trust, we let go of the fear that others will see our weaknesses, struggles, hopes, or projects. People who love us stop our limitations from turning into obstacles. If we want to form loving relationships, we cannot remain alone and self-absorbed: we have to understand the value of meeting people who will help us in friendship. Trust begets trust, and the risk of being hurt by another person is small beside the gain of learning to love and be loved. God

promises us to be present in Christian friendship.

JESUS TOOK the first step to win the apostles over, and they responded by opening their hearts wide, sharing everything they had inside. The relationship between Jesus and the disciples inspired St. Josemaria to write one of the points in *The Way*: "You write: 'To pray is to talk with God. But about what?' About what? About Him, about yourself: joys, sorrows, successes and failures, noble ambitions, daily worries, weaknesses! And acts of thanksgiving and petitions: and Love and reparation. In a word: to get to know him and to get to know yourself: 'to get acquainted!'"^[3]

When we spend time with someone else, we reveal our true selves. Even

if we hide at first, if the friendship is trusting and genuine, our protective masks tend to disappear over time. Something similar happens with Jesus. He invites us to a unique and sincere friendship, but waits for us to freely let him enter the most intimate and valuable parts of our souls. Little by little, through prayer and closeness with Him, we can show Him every corner of our lives, from our noble desires to the dark complications that threaten to choke our hope. Jesus gives us light in return for our trust. His optimistic look brings light to our lives and leads us to give the best of ourselves.

Mothers know their children better than anyone, and they are not fooled by disguises. They look at their children with wisdom and prudence and know how to encourage them, show them the way, and reward trust with gentleness and tenderness. Mary, our Mother in heaven, knows

our fears and aspirations. As at Cana, she shows us the way to her Son so that we may open our hearts wide to Him.

^[1] Pope Francis, Homily, 9-I-2018.

^[2] Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, Pastoral letter, 1-XI-2019, no. 5.

^[3] St. Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 91.

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