

Meditations: Sunday of the Fourteenth Week of Ordinary Time (Year A)

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the 14th week of Ordinary Time.

- To regain serenity and strength
- Jesus is our rest
- Helping others to rest

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ON ONE OCCASION, Jesus addressed these words to his disciples in the

midst of his prayer to his Father:
“Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). It is only natural that we seek ways to alleviate the weariness our daily efforts may cause. During those moments, our Lord presents himself as a guarantee for regaining strength and calming our spirit. A time of silent prayer can help us appreciate what we have experienced during the day from a different perspective. We see the day’s events with a new light, with God’s perspective, who is a merciful Father. That is why prayer can be for us a refuge: near the tabernacle, tensions often lessen, anger fades, we regain calm, and we dispel the clouds that may be clouding our joy.

“Come away by yourselves to a secluded place, and rest a while” (Mk 6:31), our Lord told the apostles on another occasion, and he says the same to us. With our often hectic

daily work pace, in an environment filled with distracting noise, this may seem like a beautiful but practically unattainable ideal. We would like to withdraw from so many stimuli that demand our attention in order to focus on what is essential, but we realize that it isn't so simple.

The Pope has given some very specific advice to facilitate this atmosphere of recollection: “Let us learn to stop, to turn off our mobile phones, to contemplate nature, to regenerate ourselves in dialogue with God.”^[1] Just as physical rest helps the body recover, something similar occurs in our hearts and souls when we set aside quiet time for God, without haste. He will help us recover our joy and serenity – if we have lost them – and give us the strength to fight the small or great battles of each day.

IN A MEDITATION given for his sons in Rome, Saint Josemaría spoke about the source of our strength. As the years go by, it is normal to feel more tired after a hard day of work, or to sense more deeply the pain caused by a recurring fault, our own or someone else's. Furthermore, the onset of illness can drain our physical strength and even weaken us inwardly. At such times, the founder of Opus Dei encouraged us to seek refuge in close communion with Christ. "You will discover how easy the struggle becomes then," he said; "you will see how everything, everything, even what seemed like weakness, becomes strength."^[2] —

This attitude enables us to experience adversities in a different way. Jesus usually doesn't make problems disappear magically, as though simply turning to Him were enough to guarantee a life without worries. By seeking refuge in his

heart, external events don't necessarily change, but we learn to have a divine perspective on everything that happens to us. Even what upsets us and what we don't fully understand has a meaning that we can only discover if we trust in God. "Only then will we be able to contemplate things with his eyes for he sees beyond the storm. Through that serene gaze, we can see a panorama that we cannot even glimpse on our own"^[3]

OUR LORD counts on us to help those around us to rest. Moreover, He himself will offer comfort and encouragement by making use of our own humanity, united with his. We too have likely found rest in the presence of a friend who, like Jesus, has listened to us and comforted us with their words and actions. This is

a manifestation of the desire to be *ipse Christus* – Christ himself – that beats in the heart of a Christian.

Sometimes, helping others to rest can mean sharing the weight of their worries and concerns, taking on as our own a burden that tires or overwhelms them. This may sometimes require going beyond our own routines and adjusting our plans. Thus our hearts become more like Jesus', who “took our infirmities upon himself and carried our sorrow” (Isaiah 53:4), with a willingness to suffer serenely for us to an unimaginable extent.

When we receive the consolation of Christ, we feel the impulse to become a source of rest for our brothers and sisters. Seeing that Jesus has carried our burdens encourages us to do the same for others. The Virgin Mary will help us to find rest in her Son and to spread it to those around us. As a

good mother, our Lady quickly recognizes when we are tired or overwhelmed and says to us: “Am I not here, I who am your Mother?”^[4]

^[1] Francis, Angelus, 18 July 2021.

^[2] Saint Josemaría, *While he spoke to us on the way*, p. 174.

^[3] Francis, Audience, 10 November 2021.

^[4] Words of our Lady of Guadalupe addressed to Juan Diego on 12 December 1531.

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