

Meditations: Sunday of the Twenty-Ninth Week of Ordinary Time (Year C)

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the 29th week of Ordinary Time.

- Persevering prayer
- Trust-filled prayer
- Communal prayer

PETITIONING God and not receiving a response is often hard for us to

accept. Accustomed to the immediate results offered by technology, waiting can seem arduous, since we think that every desire or request should be granted right away. Without realizing it, this accelerated pace can also shape our way of relating to God, leading us to expect the same prompt response from Him.

However, the lives of the saints reveal a different way of thinking. They prayed for years or even decades for magnanimous intentions, certain that perseverance in prayer always bears fruit, even if that fruit does not always appear immediately or in the way we expect. St. Josemaría urged us with words from the prophet Isaiah: “*Clama, ne cesses*” “Cry out, without ceasing!”^[1] He wanted to remind us that, even though God’s response may be delayed, persevering prayer always opens up new paths. Moreover, this waiting can be an opportunity for us to grow in our desire to obtain what

we are asking for and to unite ourselves more closely to our Lord.

Why, then, do we find it so difficult to accept God's silence as an answer? Perhaps that is why Jesus tells the parable of the unjust judge. In it, our Lord wants to emphasize the need "to pray always and not lose heart" (*Lk 18:1*). To illustrate this, he presents the insistent dialogue between a powerful judge "who neither feared God nor respected men" (*Lk 18:2*) and a defenseless widow who begged him humbly: "Grant me justice against my adversary" (*Lk 18:3*). The judge, tired of her insistence, finally agrees, not out of a sense of justice, but simply to be freed from her. With this image, Jesus tells us that perseverance in prayer is essential. Thus we make clear that what we are asking for is not a passing whim, but rather stems from a firm desire to turn to Him and never give up. "God listens to the cry

of those who invoke him. Even our ‘stammered’ requests, those that remain in the depths of our heart, that we are ashamed to even express, the Father listens to them and wants to give us the Holy Spirit, who inspires every prayer and transforms everything.”^[2] —

AFTER MAKING CLEAR the need for perseverance, our Lord also points to the foundation of prayer: faith. True perseverance is born of trust in God. Our persistence is not the result of selfishness, but of faith in God’s power. Nevertheless, our fragility could lead us to think that this power is relative. Jesus perceived this sentiment among the people around Him, and exclaimed: “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (*Lk 18:8*).

God, through his Son, has chosen to open wide the gates of paradise and shower humanity with immense gifts. The only key capable of opening access to this grace is faith. As St. Josemaría said: “You hear people saying sometimes that there are fewer miracles nowadays. Might it not rather be that there are fewer people living a life of faith?”^[3] The same is true today: what can be lacking is not divine power, but trust.

Hence holiness can sometimes seem like an impossible path. We recognize that there is an abyss between what God is asking of us and what we can achieve through our own efforts. The lives of the saints, in contrast, show us that the decisive thing is not how much they themselves did, but how great their faith was in divine grace. This was the experience of St. Thérèse of Lisieux: “I still have the same bold confidence of becoming a great saint,

because I don't count on my own merits, since I have none, but I trust in Him Who is Virtue and Holiness itself. God alone, content with my feeble efforts, will raise me to Himself and, clothing me with His infinite merits, He will make me a saint.”^[4]

BESIDES perseverance and trust, Christian prayer has another characteristic feature: it is communal. “Although a disciple’s prayer is confidential, it is never self-enclosed. In the secrecy of conscience, Christians don’t leave the world outside their door, but carry people and situations within their heart.”^[5] When the apostles asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He offered them a prayer that emphasizes, among other things, this aspect. In the Lord’s prayer, God is

invoked as Father, not in order to present individual petitions, but shared ones: *Our Father, give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive...*

Thus dialogue with our Lord gradually shapes our hearts to the measure of His. “We cannot pray to God as ‘Father’,” Pope Leo XIV insists, “and then be harsh and insensitive towards others. Instead, it is important to let ourselves be transformed by his goodness, his patience, his mercy, so that his face may be reflected in ours as in a mirror.”^[6] From the earliest centuries, the Christian community understood the power of this shared dimension of prayer. A Father of the Church recounts how, after the proclamation of the Gospel at Mass, “we all join in praying for ourselves and for all the others wherever they may be, so that we may be found just in our lives and actions and may be

faithful to the commandments and thus attain eternal salvation.”^[7]

Also today, the liturgy preserves this same awareness. In the Communion rite, the Church asks God for peace and unity with a petition that summarizes the trust of all the People of God: “look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.” This prayer, repeated at every Eucharistic celebration, makes clear that the power of faith is not only individual, but communal. And at the head of this family is the Virgin Mary, who opened the way for the entire Church with the most fruitful act of trust in history: “Let it be done unto me according to your word” (*Lk 1:38*).

^[1] St. Josemaría, *In Dialogue with the Lord*, no. 86.

^[2] Francis, Audience, 9 December 2020.

^[3] St. Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 190.

^[4] Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face, *Complete Works*, ed. Monte Carmelo, Burgos 2006, p. 139.

^[5] Francis, Audience, 13 February 2019.

^[6] Leo XIV, Angelus, 27 July 2025.

^[7] St. Justin, *Apology* 1, 65-67.

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