

Meditations: Friday of the Thirty-Second Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the thirty-second week of Ordinary Time. The topics are: the reality of the Lord's coming; supernatural vision reveals life where death seems to be; service is our treasure for eternity.

- The reality of the Lord's coming
- Supernatural vision reveals life where death seems to be
- Service is our treasure for eternity

AT TIMES Jesus's language is prophetic, full of symbols and comparisons. This is how He speaks today when He talks about his final coming and urges to live awaiting Him. He reminds us, first, of two episodes from the Old Testament: the universal flood in Noah's time and the punishment of Sodom after Lot's hasty departure. The message Jesus wants to convey is clear: God will come suddenly. And He tells us that, sadly, He will find many unprepared, preoccupied, or distracted by earthly matters without any sense of eternity.

By making us think about the end times, which we may perceive as something in the distant future, Jesus invites us to reflect on the present. We too may be busy with many concerns that fill our days; perhaps our days seem repetitive and the

monotony prevents us from raising our gaze to heaven. The clear reminder this Gospel provides is thus very helpful: remember that you are mortal, that death is at once certain and uncertain, unpredictable; make use of the time you have to do good, remembering that the true life of eternity will come afterward.

Looking up to heaven helps us align our lives with God's plan and the deepest truth of our human condition. We have hope because we know that life does not end with death. The same God who became close on earth awaits us eagerly in heaven, where He has prepared a dwelling for us. "The fullness of love, the fullness of beauty and greatness and knowledge" await us there, as St. Josemaria wrote. "And it will never cloy: it will satiate, yet still you will want more."^[1]

“WITH A supernatural outlook, with serenity and peace. That is the way to see things, people and events — from the viewpoint of eternity. And then, whatever barrier blocks your way — even if it is, humanly speaking, enormous — when you really raise your eyes to Heaven, how tiny it becomes!”^[2] Supernatural vision means bringing eternal life into our day-to-day life, considering the heaven God has prepared for us when our days on earth come to an end. The broad and profound perspective of faith resizes the problems we face in our family, in the Church, in the world...

Considering reality with a supernatural vision — which means seeing it more with God's eyes, or in other words, as it really is — introduces us to God's wisdom and helps us discover the positive meaning of the renunciations or sacrifices we occasionally have to

make. *Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses it will save it (Lk 17:33)*, Jesus says in the Gospel. In the Christian life, it is often necessary to lose in order to gain, to die in order to bear fruit, to detach from what hinders us from following Christ closely and purify ourselves so our souls can soar higher. Looking at Jesus, we realize that it is worthwhile to make an effort to struggle joyfully, acknowledging our own littleness, but also knowing that “everything is good for those who love God. Everything in this world can be put right, except death, and for us death is Life.”^[3]

OUR FAITH in eternal life reveals the true value of the present time. God, in his love, has placed us on earth, and in the end we will return to Him.

Our years are numbered: they are a gift from God and He has given us the freedom to use them as we see fit. Time is a precious treasure that God leaves in our hands. We can waste it or, conversely, make good use of it, and “live every moment of our lives with a lively awareness of eternity.”^[4]

We can use time focused on ourselves (our health, prestige, work, well-being, status), or we can seek the fruits of eternity through service. The desire to serve leads us to put our time at God’s disposal, not giving in to anxiety about the future, trusting that we collaborate with God in building his kingdom. Through service, our time surpasses its limits and becomes the “forever” of eternity.

“When I reflect on this, how well I understand St Paul’s exclamation when he writes to the Corinthians,”

St. Josemaría wrote. “*Tempus breve est.* How short indeed is the time of our passing through this world! [...] Brief indeed is our time for loving, for giving, for making atonement.”^[5]

We find the best example of service to God and the people we encounter in Mary, who possesses the greatest treasure in heaven.

^[1] Saint Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 995.

^[2] *Ibid.*, no. 996.

^[3] *Ibid.*, no. 1001.

^[4] Saint Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 239.

^[5] Saint Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 39.

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