

Meditations: Monday of the Twenty- Second Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist
our prayer during the 22nd
week of Ordinary Time.

- Jesus offers his salvation to all
humanity
 - The mission of Christians
 - When rejection arises
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WHEN our Lord began his public life, St. Luke tells us that Jesus went to Nazareth, the town where he had spent his childhood. And on the Sabbath He went to the synagogue “and stood up to read” (*Lk 4:16*). Unrolling the book of Isaiah, he proclaimed the prophet’s words: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind” (*Lk 4:18; Is 61:1-2*). On finishing, Jesus rolled up the book and sat down, while everyone in the synagogue “kept their eyes fixed on him” (*Lk 4:20*). Then He broke the silence with words that surprised everyone: “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (*Lk 4:21*).

Christ’s life is marked by the announcement of salvation to all humanity. The miracles He performs

– prophesied by Isaiah – confirm that the Kingdom of God is already present; they proclaim the definitive defeat of Satan and manifest his power to save mankind from the evil that threatens each soul. Therefore our Lord doesn't limit himself to working these miracles for the Jews; foreigners as well are witnesses of these signs. Jesus doesn't put up any barriers to his love. He only asks that we approach Him with humility and faith. "The starting point of Christian life is not our worthiness; in fact, the Lord was able to accomplish little with those who thought they were good and decent. Whenever we consider ourselves smarter or better than others, that is the beginning of the end. The Lord does not work miracles with those who consider themselves righteous, but with those who know themselves needy. He is not attracted by our goodness; that is not why he loves us. He loves us just as we are; he is looking for people

who are not self-sufficient, but ready to open their hearts to him.”^[1]

“THE SPIRIT of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me” (*Lk* 4:18). In the Old Testament, anointing consisted of pouring holy oil on someone’s head as a sign that God had chosen that person and would accompany him on his mission. Christians have been anointed at Baptism, through which “we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission.”^[2] Like Jesus, our life too can reveal, by God’s grace, divine mercy shown towards all men and women. We can carry out this apostolic mission first of all with the people we encounter each day, since ordinary

life is the place of our daily self-giving to others.

“I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing. All around us we begin to see nurses, teachers, politicians who have chosen deep down to be with others and for others. But once we separate our work from our private lives, everything turns grey and we will always be seeking recognition or asserting our needs.”^[3]

Through Baptism we were anointed to collaborate in Jesus’ work of love, to share in his universal redemptive mission. “A Christian knows that he is grafted onto Christ through Baptism. He is empowered to fight for Christ through Confirmation, called to act in the world sharing the

royal, prophetic and priestly role of Christ. He has become one and the same thing with Christ through the Eucharist, the sacrament of unity and love. And so, like Christ, he has to live for other men, loving each and every one around him and indeed all humanity.”^[4] —

AFTER announcing that the prophecy about the Messiah is fulfilled in his person, our Lord anticipates the objections that his fellow townsmen might raise, out of envy or narrow-mindedness, regarding the wonders He has worked throughout Galilee. “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country” (*Lk* 4:24). Jesus shows the universality of God’s love by pointing to two passages in the Bible where foreigners are given priority over Jewish widows and lepers: the

prophet Elijah being sent to help a Phoenician woman and the prophet Elisha healing a Syrian man. “When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong” (*Lk 4:28-29*).

Christ met with admiration and gratitude when He began his redemptive mission; people who marveled at his deeds and joyfully welcomed his message of salvation. But He also met with resistance from some of the Jews, often those who were more zealous in their own viewpoint. Something similar happens in the mission of every Christian: along with those who receive the Good News with enthusiasm, there are also those who reject it. Perhaps that is why discouragement can arise in the face

of the lack of visible fruit or the fear of being rebuffed. But as St. Josemaría stressed, even when our efforts seem to be sterile, God acts in each person's soul: "There is no human heart, no matter how deeply immersed in sin, which does not conceal, like embers among the ashes, a flicker of nobility. Whenever I have sounded out such hearts, talking to them individually with the words of Christ, they have always responded."^[5] —

Every day, in our prayer, we can remember the mission we have received that encompasses our entire life, and we can ask God for his grace to set out anew in the effort to alleviate suffering, to serve all mankind, helping them to encounter the mercy of Jesus through our words and actions. "Let us go forth, then, let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ . . . I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and

dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.”^[6] We can ask the Virgin Mary to help us to undertake courageously the mission of bringing her Son’s love to the people around us.

^[1] Francis, Homily, 29 June 2019.

^[2] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1213.

^[3] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 273.

^[4] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 106.

^[5] St. Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 74.

^[6] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 49.

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