

# Meditations: Wednesday of the Sixteenth Week of Ordinary Time

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

- God pays attention to simplicity
- The joy of being an overflowing spring
- Being a priest, king and prophet

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STORIES about vocations in Sacred Scripture have many elements in common. One is the inequality between the human abilities of the person called and the mission God entrusts to them. At first glance, it often doesn't seem to be an appropriate choice. But our Lord doesn't focus on appearances but on a quality that often goes unnoticed: simplicity of heart. This is what makes the soil on which the divine seed falls good and able to produce fruit (cf. *Mt 13:9*). That person realizes that the growth doesn't depend so much on what he or she does, but on letting God work through them. “You realize that you are weak,” St. Josemaría wrote. “And indeed you are. And in spite of that – rather just because of that – God have chosen you. He always uses inadequate instruments, so that the ‘work’ will be seen to be his. He only asks you for docility.”<sup>[1]</sup> —

In contrast, “the proud man is one who thinks he is much more than he really is; one who frets about being recognized as greater than others, always wants to see his own merits recognized, and despises others, deeming them inferior to himself.”<sup>[2]</sup>

In the Gospels we see that Jesus, when he meets people who are too sure of themselves, “heals them with the medicine of humility. This teaches us that salvation is not in our own hands, but rather a free gift that God wants to grant us.”<sup>[3]</sup>

In our interactions with those around us we can cultivate a series of attitudes that help us attain a simple heart: reacting with serenity and gratitude when we are corrected; focusing on the positive qualities of others; accepting our own and others’ mistakes with a sense of humor; recognizing the gifts God has given us. Thus our life will become the good soil that will let the

divine seed grow and yield fruit, because "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Jas 4:6).

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IT SOMETIMES happens that those who are called by God are misunderstood by others. Moses had to endure the criticism and murmurings of his own people when they were undergoing tribulations in the desert. Jeremiah confronted contempt when his calls to conversion were ignored.

Announcing God's presence today can also be a thankless effort. But Christians know that they are not alone. They are not spreading an ideology or selling a product, but proclaiming a Word that surpasses and transcends them, that offers hope and peace, and that responds to the deepest longings of the human heart.

The voice of a Christian is heard especially through the witness of his or her life, rather than through loud words. The seed we have received at Baptism bears fruit discreetly and naturally every day through our friendship and care for others. “If we look around us at this world that we love because it is God’s creation, we will find that the parable holds true. The word of Christ is fruitful; it stirs many souls to dedication and fidelity. The life and conduct of those who serve God have changed history. Even many of those who do not know our Lord are motivated, perhaps unconsciously, by ideals which derive from Christianity.”<sup>[4]</sup>

Knowing that we have been chosen by God and realizing the good that we can sow around us will help us to make sense of the difficulties that crop up on our path. “The work of evangelization enriches the mind and the heart; it opens up spiritual

horizons; it makes us more and more sensitive to the workings of the Holy Spirit, and it takes us beyond our limited spiritual constructs. A committed missionary knows the joy of being a spring which spills over and refreshes others. Only the person who feels happiness in seeking the good of others, in desiring their happiness, can be a missionary. This openness of the heart is a source of joy, since ‘it is more blessed to give than to receive’ (Acts 20:35). We do not live better when we flee, hide, refuse to share, stop giving and lock ourselves up in own comforts.”<sup>[5]</sup> For God rewards generosity “with a humility filled with joy.”<sup>[6]</sup>

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“CHRISTIANS know that they are grafted onto Christ through baptism. They are empowered to fight for

Christ through confirmation, called to act in the world sharing in the royal, prophetic and priestly role of Christ. They have become one and the same thing with Christ through the Eucharist, the sacrament of unity and love.”<sup>[7]</sup> Through the sacraments we are conformed to what Jesus is: Priest, King and Prophet.<sup>[8]</sup> All of us, lay faithful and pastors, each in our own way, share in the Church’s mission, which is a true expression of the threefold office that Christ carries out on behalf of his people.<sup>[9]</sup>

The common priesthood consecrates us and enables us to bring all creatures to God, offering Him the sacrifice of our own existence. As St. Paul writes: “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (*1 Cor 10:31*). All of our actions, from those we consider the most insignificant to the most important, can be offered to our Lord. Moreover, we can also share in

Christ's royal function, who, being Lord of the universe, became the servant of all.<sup>[10]</sup> For Christians, "to serve Christ is to reign."<sup>[11]</sup> Being a king does not mean giving orders so that others obey. To reign with Christ is to serve out of love; to reign is to kneel down and wash the feet of others, as Jesus did with the apostles.

Finally, the Christian faithful also share in Christ's prophetic character. We are a prophet above all when we deepen in our understanding of the faith and become a witness to Jesus in the middle of this world.<sup>[12]</sup> The prophet is not someone who announces future things, but someone who speaks in God's name, who helps others to interpret their own history and daily events with God's eyes. Through Baptism we are all in this sense prophets of our Lord, called to announce to our relatives, friends and acquaintances the beauty of his love and mercy. We can

ask the Virgin Mary to help us to be faithful to the mission God has given us, knowing that “many great things depend” on our yes.<sup>[13]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> St. Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 475.

<sup>[2]</sup> Francis, Audience, 6 March 2024.

<sup>[3]</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>[4]</sup> St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 150.

<sup>[5]</sup> Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 272.

<sup>[6]</sup> St. Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 591.

<sup>[7]</sup> St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 106.

<sup>[8]</sup> Cf. Rite of Baptism, post-baptismal anointing.

<sup>[9]</sup> Cf. Monsigor Fernando Ocáriz, *Naturaleza, gracia y gloria*, pp. 241-260.

<sup>[10]</sup> Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 786.

<sup>[11]</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, no. 36.

<sup>[12]</sup> Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 785.

<sup>[13]</sup> St. Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 755.

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