

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

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

- God enters our house
- Our Lord frees us
- Goodness that spreads naturally

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JESUS has only recently begun to preach, and his fame has spread

throughout the region. Perhaps that is why a man possessed by a devil challenged our Lord in the synagogue in Capernaum (cf. *Lk* 4:31-37). Peter would have been amazed at the power of the Master, whose teachings moved his heart and attracted him. Christ spoke in a way that everyone understood. And He accompanied his words with deeds that confirmed them and gave them greater authority. With his forceful words, “Be silent, and come out of him!” (*Lk* 4:35), Jesus casts the demon out of that man.

Then Jesus “arose and left the synagogue, and entered Simon’s house” (*Lk* 4:38). There Peter, having just witnessed a miracle, asks Christ to cure his mother-in-law, who was “ill with a high fever” (*Lk* 4:38). Jesus was happy to do so, undeterred by the fact that it was the Sabbath. And like with the unclean spirit He had just cast out, his words alone are

enough to dispel the fever. Peter's mother-in-law got up right away and began to serve them (cf. *Lk* 4:39).

When we receive our Lord in Communion, Jesus enters our home as he did Peter's. And in those moments, like the apostle, we can entrust to Him what is weighing on our hearts: our worries, dreams, doubts, sorrows... In reality, God is always ready to help us even before we ask Him. But He wants us to go to Him, to open our heart to Him and place our needs in his hands. "If you feel for whatever reason that you cannot manage, abandon yourself in God, telling him: Lord, I trust in you, I abandon myself in you, but help me in my weakness! And filled with confidence, say: See Jesus what a filthy rag I am. My life seems to me so miserable. I am not worthy to be a son of yours. Tell him all this – and tell him so over and over again. It will not be long before you hear him

say, *Ne timeas!* – do not be afraid; and also: *Surge et ambula!* – rise up and walk!”^[1]
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IN THE GOSPEL of St. Luke, we see for the first time something that will be a constant in the Master’s public life. Although many people beg Him to heal their bodies, Jesus doesn’t stop there. Christ heals their most serious ailments: those of the soul. As He will also do on another occasion, He first tells the paralytic who is lowered through the roof of a house: “Your sins are forgiven you” (*Lk* 5:20). And only later will He add: “rise, take up your bed and go home” (*Lk* 5:24).

“When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on every

one of them and healed them” (*Lk* 4:40). Jesus knows that the kingdom He is about to establish needs to take root in people’s souls. That is why He “prepares the ground” and frees them from both their physical and spiritual illnesses. “Demons also came out of many, crying, ‘You are the Son of God!’” (*Lk* 4:41). “An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. *1 Jn* 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father’s infinite mercy.”^[2] —

We too can approach our Lord with the desire that He uproot from our soul everything that might separate us from Him. As St. Josemaría wrote:

“Ask the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and your Mother, to make you know yourself and weep for all those foul things that have passed through you, and which, alas, have left such dregs behind... And at the same time, without wishing to stop considering all that, say to him: Jesus, give me a Love that will act like a purifying fire in which my miserable flesh, my miserable heart, my miserable soul, my miserable body may be consumed and cleansed of all earthly wretchedness. And when I have been completely emptied of myself, fill me with yourself. May I never become attached to anything here below. May Love always sustain me.”^[3] —

JESUS had risen very early to pray. His face reflects not only the love that leads Him to heal all those who come to him, but also the strength

that impels Him to continue spreading the good news. Hence when some in the crowd tried to stop Him from leaving, Christ replied: “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose” (*Lk 4:43*).

Jesus wants to reach more souls. His desire to bring the Kingdom to all mankind is what leads him to preach in all the synagogues of Judea. Before the Ascension, our Lord will give his disciples this mandate: that conversion for the forgiveness of sins be preached in his name in all places, beginning from Jerusalem.

Everything the apostles have seen and heard during their years with Christ is to be shared with all humanity. “Goodness always tends to spread. Every authentic experience of truth and goodness seeks by its very nature to grow within us, and any person who has experienced a

profound liberation becomes more sensitive to the needs of others. As it expands, goodness takes root and develops.”^[4] —

The apostles were the first to spread the news of what Jesus has done for all mankind. And today Jesus wants us who are his disciples to continue this mission. “I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled.’ We have approached the fire of the love of God. Let us allow that fire to burn our lives. Let us feed the desire to spread that divine fire throughout the world, making it known to all the people around us, so that they too can experience the peace of Christ and find happiness there.”^[5] — We can turn to the Virgin Mary’s intercession, asking that “the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth, illuminating even the fringes of our world.”^[6] —

[1] St. Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 287.

[2] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 24.

[3] St. Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 41.

[4] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 9.

[5] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 170.

[6] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 288.

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