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Meditations: January 26, Saints Timothy and Titus

Some reflections that can assist our prayer on the feast of Saints Timothy and Titus, faithful co-workers of Saint Paul.

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- Two faithful co-workers of Saint Paul.
- The nourishment of Sacred Scripture
- Evangelization is done by God himself

THE NEW TESTAMENT mentions more than sixty co-workers of Saint Paul. The Apostle was often accompanied by other faithful who he would leave in charge of the communities being born. Among these co-workers Saints Timothy and Titus stand out, whose memorial we celebrate the day after the feast of Saint Paul's conversion.

From his early youth, Timothy was a faithful collaborator of Saint Paul. He accompanied him on trips throughout Asia Minor; they both spent time in the same prison and Paul sent him out on various missions. The Apostle would certainly have always felt close to him, even when sometimes they were physically far apart. Saint Paul's gratitude for his support led him to pray often for Timothy and his family, whom he knew quite well: *I remember you constantly in my prayers. As I remember your tears, I*

long night and day to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you (2 Tim 1:3-5).

These words were probably written from Rome, during the second captivity that would culminate in his martyrdom.

Titus too was a faithful co-worker of the Apostle. At least one letter that he received from Saint Paul has been preserved. It forms part of the so-called “pastoral epistles,” which offer practical guidelines for the growth of the young Christian communities.

Titus, my true child in a common faith, Paul writes at the beginning of this letter. After giving him some advice, Saint Paul concludes: *let our people learn to devote themselves to good works (Tit 3:14).* This is good advice also for us, who want to be apostles like Timothy and Titus. Our

sincere concern for everyone will be the best proclamation of the Gospel.

IN HIS SECOND LETTER to Timothy, Saint Paul thanks his co-worker for his perseverance and urges him to remain firm in his faith: *from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:15-17).*

In order to better assimilate this divine nourishment, so that it fills us with wisdom, we need to foster in our heart an attitude of listening, of wonder, of an ever renewed intimate

dialogue. “I think we can all improve a bit in this respect: by becoming better listeners of the Word of God, in order to be less rich in our own words and richer in his words. I think of the priest who has the task of preaching. How can he preach if he has not first opened his heart, or listened in silence to the Word of God? I think of fathers and mothers, who are the primary educators [of their children]: how can they educate them if their consciences have not been enlightened by the Word of God. If their way of thinking and acting is not guided by the Word, what sort of example can they possibly give to their children? And I think of catechists and all those who are involved in education: if their hearts have not been enkindled by the Word, how can they warm the hearts of others, of children, of youth, of adults? It is not enough just to read the Sacred Scriptures; we

need to listen to Jesus who speaks in them.”^[1]

A hand-written document of Saint Josemaría that dates from 1933 contains 112 texts from the New Testament, preceded by the following heading: “Words of the New Testament, frequently meditated on.”^[2] If we frequently turn to the Word of God, we too will have our own key passages, those that we keep in our heart in a special way, that have given us light and strengthened us in our faith.

JESUS CHOOSES seventy-two disciples and sends them out two by two, telling them: *The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (Lk 10:2).* It is the

Lord who sends the laborers. And although the work is immense, it is He who will ensure that it comes to fruition. Therefore Saint Paul encourages Timothy to place his hope in God, who *called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began* (2 Tim 1:8-9).

Saint Josemaría stressed that “faith is an essential requirement in the apostolate, which is often shown by constancy in speaking about God, even though the fruits are slow to appear.”^[3] —

“The harvest is also abundant today. Even though it may seem that large parts of the modern world, large numbers of our contemporaries turn their backs on God and consider faith something of the past, yet there is a yearning that justice, love and peace will be established at last, that poverty and suffering will be

surmounted and that men and women will find joy. The longing for all these things is present in the contemporary world, the longing for what is great and what is good. It is a yearning for the Redeemer, for God himself, even when he is denied. At the same time the Lord makes us realize that it cannot be merely we ourselves who send laborers to his harvest; that it is not a question of good management or of our own organizational ability. God alone can send out laborers to the field of his harvest. Yet he wants to send them through the door of our prayer.”^[4]

Mary, Queen of Apostles, accompanied many of the first Christians in their joyful endeavor to enkindle the faith in the hearts of those around them. And she continues to accompany us.

^[1] Francis, Speech, 4 October 2013.

[2] Cf. *Studia et Documenta* 1 (2007), pp. 259-286.

[3] Saint Josemaría, *Furrow*, no. 207.

[4] Benedict XVI, Homily, 5 February 2011.

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