

Meditations: Monday of the Sixth Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the sixth week of Ordinary Time. The topics are: consolation from listening to Jesus; God is close to us; humility and trust.

- Consolation from listening to Jesus
 - God is close to us
 - Humility and trust
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SOME OF the Pharisees liked to argue with Jesus. On one occasion, they went as far as to tempt Him, asking for a sign from heaven. Despite having witnessed some of his miracles, they were not satisfied. Perhaps they expected a more spectacular manifestation of the arrival of the Kingdom of God (cf. *Lk 17:20-21*) or they were looking for an opportunity to twist and misinterpret a new sign.

This attitude contrasts with the apostles'. Being with Jesus and listening to Him was enough for them to recognize that the Kingdom of God had already come. When many disciples stopped following Christ after the Bread of Life discourse, Saint Peter spoke on behalf of the apostles: *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God (Jn 6:68-69)*. They did

not need great miracles to believe in Him: they were content with what they had heard Him say.

The words of the Lord have always been a tremendous source of comfort for Christians, especially when they are read in the Holy Mass. The priest kisses the book after proclaiming the Gospel as an expression of love and recognition, because what is written there comes from Revelation.

Through his word, Christ becomes present among the faithful. “The liturgy is the privileged place in which to hear the divine Word which makes present the Lord's saving acts; but it is also the context in which the community raises its prayer celebrating divine love. God and man meet each other in an embrace of salvation that finds fulfillment precisely in the liturgical celebration.”^[1] We can ask Jesus to help us listen to his words in the

Mass with the same enthusiasm and simplicity as the apostles.

SOMETIMES, LIKE the Pharisees, we may desire a more spectacular sign from God in times of difficulty; we feel the need for consolation in order to face the situation serenely. But we already have the signs that nourish and ignite our faith in Sacred Scripture and the sacraments. They are privileged paths by which Jesus Himself comes to meet us, offering his love and closeness. “The sacraments express and realize an effective and profound communion among us, for in them we encounter Christ the Saviour and, through him, our brothers and sisters in faith. The sacraments are not mere appearances, they are not rituals; they are the power of Christ.”^[2]

Embracing the closeness that God offers us in the sacraments will help us hear his voice in all circumstances. He speaks to us “through the events of daily life, through the joys and sufferings that go with it, the people who are close to you, the voice of your conscience thirsting for truth, happiness, goodness and beauty.”^[3] —

Jesus always stays by our side, speaking and listening to us. The certainty that we share our life with Him frees us from fears and fills us with hope. “What does it matter if you have the whole world against you, with all its power?” Saint Josemaría wrote. “You... keep going! Repeat the words of the psalm: ‘The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom need I fear? *Si consistant adversum me castra, non timebit cor meum.* — Though an army pitched camp against me, my heart shall not be afraid.’”^[4] — We can ask ourselves:

do I leave my concerns in Jesus's hands, especially in the Holy Mass?

THE APOSTLES' simplicity enabled them to see the sign of Jesus's messianic mission in his words and actions. In contrast, the pride of some Pharisees prevented them from recognizing Jesus. Although He said that no sign would be given to that generation, Jesus later offered another: the Resurrection. But they would not abandon their disbelief, even before this sign. They knew what had happened through the guards (cf. *Mt 28:11-14*), but they preferred to cling to their own ideas rather than admit their mistake. What was foretold was fulfilled: *If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead (Lk 16:31).*

As Saint Peter wrote, *God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble* (1 Pt 5:5). Humility allows us to recognize that, humanly speaking, we may not always measure up: we need to trust that God gives us strength. St. Josemaría liked to evoke the image of dust lifted by the wind, which shines gold when it reflects the sun: “In the same way, the grace of God lifts us high and reflects in us all that marvel of goodness, wisdom, effectiveness, beauty, which is God. If you and I acknowledge ourselves as dust and misery, very little, the Lord will provide the rest. It's a consideration that fills my soul.”^[5]

We do not win Jesus's heart primarily by our good works, but by letting Him fill our lives and acknowledging the gifts He gives us. We can ask his Mother for the humility not to hinder God's action in our soul, so that He may do great things in our lives too.

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[1] Pope Benedict XVI, Audience, 5-X-2005.

[2] Pope Francis, Audience, 6-XI-2013.

[3] Saint John Paul II, Address, 5-VI-2004.

[4] Saint Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 482.

[5] Saint Josemaría, Letter 2, no. 4.

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