

Meditations: Saturday of the Eleventh Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the 11th week of Ordinary Time.

- A Creator who is mercy
- Serving only one Lord
- God is always faithful

WHEN ADDRESSING the early Christians in Rome, Saint Paul frequently recalled the immensity of

God's love: "If God is for us, who is against us? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (*Rom* 8:31, 39). Because he had experienced it personally, the Apostle was convinced that nothing can separate us from divine love, incarnated in Christ Jesus. And this trust in God comes from knowing, through faith, that He is a merciful Creator who never abandons us: his mercy fills the earth, his faithfulness reaches to heaven (cf. *Ps* 36:6). This same interior experience led Saint Augustine to exclaim: "All my hope lies in your great mercy alone."^[1]

We read in the Responsorial Psalm today: "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant. Forever will I confirm your posterity and establish your throne for all generations. If his sons forsake my law and walk not according to my ordinances, if they violate my statutes and keep not my

commands, I will punish their crime with a rod and their guilt with stripes. Yet my mercy I will not take from him, nor will I belie my faithfulness” (*Ps 89:28-32*). This Psalm is accompanied in today’s Liturgy of the Word by the narrative of how the kingdom of Judah abandoned the temple to serve idols. The Chosen People sought human security, temporal triumph, the pride of power above what was right. And they were ultimately defeated by an army far inferior to their own and abandoned to public disgrace.

Our love for God does not depend on the personal triumph or success that He grants us in this life. As Jesus said, we want to do good so that others “may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (*Mt 5:16*). This light that we can offer others is a discreet reference to the God all men and

women are seeking and who is mercy.

“NO ONE can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (*Mt 6:24-25*). Our Lord warns us against the possibility of being deceived by the apparent power of money – the power that makes us think we are masters of creation and possessors of other people. But in reality, we end up being enslaved by our own selfishness, in exchange for the poor trinkets that prevent us from experiencing the greatness of God’s love.

We can ask God to enlighten our intellect in order to discern how we should act in every circumstance: in

our work, in our family life, in our hobbies or interests, so that everything in our life is directed towards letting ourselves be loved by God. Sometimes, even without realizing it, we can fall into the trap of giving priority to earthly security and human glory. But Jesus insists: “Do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ . . . Who among you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” (cf. *Mt 6:25, 30*).

Even those who dedicate themselves intensely to apostolic activities can find that, due to an excess of human outlook, they lose sight of their ultimate goal. Saint Josemaría stressed that “the real success or failure of our apostolic activities depends on whether, besides being humanly well-run, they help those who carry them out and those who make use of their services to love

God better, to feel their fraternity with their fellow men and women, and to manifest these sentiments in a disinterested service of humanity.”^[2]

We cannot serve more than one master. Christian life can be summed up as a constant purification of our heart, so that our adoration is directed only towards God, and only through Him do we let our heart embrace the goods of this world.

WE CANNOT deny that evil also exists in the world. But as we see in today’s Responsorial Psalm, the knowledge of God that we acquire through faith leads us to always trust that He will never abandon us. “Our faithfulness is nothing more than a response to God’s faithfulness. God is faithful to his word, faithful to his promise.”^[3]

“The evils of our world – and those of the Church – must not be excuses for diminishing our commitment and our fervor. Let us look upon them as challenges which can help us to grow. With the eyes of faith, we can see the light which the Holy Spirit always radiates in the midst of darkness, never forgetting that ‘where sin increased, grace has abounded all the more’ (*Rom 5:20*).”^[4]

Our faith leads us to always be optimistic, since we know that God is the Lord of the world, that He is all-powerful, and that evil can be overcome with a superabundance of good.

Since we know how weak we are, some circumstances may lead us to doubt our own abilities and good dispositions. But there is no room for doubting God, his all-powerful, yet discreet, action, or his plans for the holiness of each one of us. “Faith is the foundation of fidelity. Not vain

trust in our human ability, but faith in God, who is the foundation of hope (cf. *Hebr* 11:1)."^[5] Our Lord tells us in the Gospel: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (*Mt* 6:33). Mary always opened her heart to God's action, and she was full of grace: this is the secret to overcoming evil with God's goodness.

^[1] St. Augustine, *Confessions*, no. 10.

^[2] St. Josemaría, *Conversations*, no. 31.

^[3] Francis, Homily, 15 April 2020.

^[4] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 84.

^[5] Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz, *Pastoral Letter*, 19 March 2022, no.7.

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