

Meditations: Saturday of the Fourteenth Week of Ordinary Time

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

- God knows our struggles
- Calling things by their name
- Sincerity in spiritual direction

DURING his time on earth, Jesus met many simple people who told Him with sincerity what was in their hearts. But He also met others who failed to show the same love for the truth; perhaps they did good works, but their intentions were not always upright. That is why on one occasion our Lord exclaimed: “nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known” (*Mt 10:26*).

Christ knows exactly what we are like. For Him, no mask can hide our defects or amplify our virtues. He wants our relationship with Him to be marked by sincerity. The psalmist, a model of prayer for us Christians, addresses God in this way: “Lord, you have probed me, you know me: you know when I sit and stand; you understand my thoughts from afar. You sift through my travels and my rest; with all my ways you are familiar” (*Ps 139:1-3*).

All our struggles and efforts are known to our Lord. Even in our stumbles we can remain at peace, because our Lord knows the deepest intentions in our heart. St. Josemaría warned us against the possibility of being afraid to see ourselves as we are before God: “Do you want to know how to be frank and simple? Listen to these words of Peter and meditate on them: *Domine, tu omnia nosti...* Lord, you know all things!”^[1] Nothing gives us more peace than the certainty that God is so close to us, and He does not overlook even our smallest intention to love.

SINCERITY in our relationship with God leads us to know ourselves in depth, to know what our personality and way of being are really like, with our possibilities for serving others and our limitations. “You understood

what sincerity is,” Saint Josemaría said, “when you wrote to me: ‘I am trying to form the habit of calling things by their right names and, above all, not looking for words for what does not exist.’”^[2] —

The Apostle John writes that “if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (*1 Jn 1:8*). It is difficult to find someone who claims to have no faults and assures us they are never wrong. “But here is something we can be deceived by: saying ‘we are all sinners,’ as if to say ‘good morning,’ doing so out of habit or good manners, and not truly being aware of sin.”^[3] When we fall into this superficial routine, it can be more difficult to recognize specific faults and show ourselves to be in need. But St. John adds that it is precisely in this sincere recognition that we find God’s forgiveness and help to purify us (cf. *1 Jn 1:9*).

Sincerity leads us to be specific. Sin is not something abstract, but a reality that has specific manifestations in our daily lives. In our dialogue with God we should try to give the right name to the faults that distance us from Him and from others, and often this can give rise to resolutions that nourish our struggle for holiness. We can ask our Lord for the wisdom of being specific, so that we learn how to be sincere with ourselves and thus grow in our love for God and those around us each day.

WHEN it comes to getting to know ourselves, we can encounter a difficulty that comes from an innate bias. Popular wisdom expresses this reality with a succinct proverb: “The doctor cannot cure himself.” Because of sin, or simply because we do not have enough distance from

ourselves, sometimes our judgments about ourselves are not entirely accurate. We can find it hard to evaluate calmly and serenely how to go forward during certain stages in life. Hence God places people at our side who can bring light to our path. When we talk about our life with someone who has earned our trust, we open up “one of the most beautiful and intimate forms of communication. It allows us to discover things that were unknown to us until then, small and simple things but, as the Gospel says, it is precisely from small things that great things are born.”^[4]

In spiritual direction we find the accompaniment of a person who, sometimes simply by their presence, and other times by the wisdom of their experience, can help us to know God and ourselves better. Saint Josemaría gave us some specific advice here: “When you open your

soul, say first what you wouldn't like to be known. In this way the devil will always end up defeated. Lay your soul wide open, clearly and simply, so that the rays of God's Love may reach and illuminate the last corner of it!"^[5]

The help of spiritual direction will not always result in specific suggestions for resolving problems. Sometimes we will find light simply by being sincere, by putting words to a concern and humbly recognizing that we need help. Saint Josemaría, after years of experience accompanying and being accompanied spiritually, wrote: "You opened your heart sincerely to your director, speaking in the presence of God. And it was marvelous to see how you yourself were finding the right answers to your evasive attempts."^[6] We can ask Mary to obtain for us from God the sincerity with God, with ourselves and with

others that will make our soul ever more simple.

^[1] St. Josemaría, *Furrow*, no. 326.

^[2] *Ibid.*, no. 332.

^[3] Francis, Homily, 29 April 2020.

^[4] Francis, Audience, 19 October 2022.

^[5] St. Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 126.

^[6] St. Josemaría, *Furrow*, no. 152.