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Meditations: Sunday of the Thirty-Third Week of Ordinary Time (Year C)

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the 33rd week of Ordinary Time.

- Trusting in Christ's action
- God counts on our efforts
- Foundation of our security

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JESUS is in the Temple. After some people express admiration for its

beauty and adornments, He turns to his disciples and tells them about future persecutions and the destruction of the Temple. And our Lord gives them a number of recommendations for confronting these events. “They will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons . . . So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance” (*Lk 21:12-14*).

This advice may seem a bit strange to us. What is the point of not preparing a defense against unjust persecution? But perhaps Jesus wants us to focus not on what we can do ourselves, but rather on what He can do in us, especially during trying times: “I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict” (*Lk 21:15*). He places before our eyes our limitations, so that He may shine forth in our lives. His words of

assurance should enkindle our faith and hope since they remind us that we are never alone.

St. Josemaría experienced this reality in his own life. Once, when walking through the streets of London and seeing the people with their determined stride, the material and financial power, he felt so daunted and incapable that he said to himself: “Josemaría, you can’t do anything here.” And he quickly received the answer: “You, no! But I yes! You certainly won’t be able to; but I can.”^[1] This conviction was so deeply ingrained in his soul that in *The Way* he wrote: “You feel a gigantic faith. He who gives you that faith will give you the means.”^[2]

KNOWING that God is always at our side leads us to live serenely and

optimistically. This doesn't mean, however, that our actions aren't important, that making one decision or another is the same. To extend His reign in our hearts, Christ counts on what we do and what we are capable of doing. The Gospel, in fact, gives us many examples of people who assisted Jesus with their own actions: filling jars with water, opening a hole in a roof, obtaining the loaves and fishes, giving a drink to a thirsty stranger... These are small deeds within anyone's reach, but when carried out they had unimaginable results: the best wine, the healing of a paralytic, a superabundance of food, a complete change of life.

Jesus is surely moved by our struggle for sanctity. "The God of our faith is not a distant being, who observes with indifference the fate of humankind. He is a Father who ardently loves his children, a Creator God who overflows with affection for

his creatures.”^[3] He will never give us a task we are incapable of accomplishing. He invites us to assist Him with the ordinary things in our daily lives, which may seem small to us, but in his hands take on an unsuspected dimension. He surpasses our limitations in ways we cannot imagine. “Jesus doesn’t ask us for what we don’t have. Rather, he makes us see that if each of us offers the little that we have, a miracle can be accomplished. God is able to multiply our small acts of love and make us sharers in his gift.”^[4]

SEEING the events that our Lord announces, the persecution and trials, we can feel that “our faith is weak and our path can become difficult, blocked by adverse forces.”^[5] In such situations, it can be helpful to remember that our hope is

founded on “something that has already been accomplished and that will truly be a reality for each of us”^[6]: Jesus’ triumph over evil and death. Christ has conquered death and made us sharers in his immortal life

Since the Church’s first days, Christians have always confronted difficulties. We, like them, can overcome any obstacle because Christ is truly present in the world, in the Church, and in our lives. Our Lord promises all those who share in his mission, even when our joy is often mixed with weariness: “By your endurance you will gain your lives” (*Lk 21:19*).

Accepting trials with the conviction that we are always in God’s hands will lead us to live with great serenity. “You asked our Lord to let you suffer a little for Him,” St. Josemaría wrote. “But when

suffering comes in such a normal, human form – family difficulties and problems, or those thousand little annoying things of ordinary life – you find it hard to see Christ behind them. “Open your hands willingly to those nails, and your sorrow will be turned into joy.”^[7] We can ask our Lady to help us to accept the small annoyances of each day with the certainty that her Son always accompanies us.

^[1] Cf. Andrés Vázquez de Prada, *The Founder of Opus Dei* volume III, pp. 340-345

^[2] St. Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 577.

^[3] St. Josemaría, Speech at Academic Investiture Ceremony, “The Commitment to Truth,” 9 May 1974.

^[4] Benedict XVI, Angelus, 29 July 2012.

^[5] Francis, Angelus, 2 August 2020.

^[6] Francis, Audience, 15 February 2017.

^[7] St. Josemaría, *Furrow*, no. 234.

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