

Meditations: Tuesday of the Thirty-Fourth Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the thirty-fourth week of Ordinary Time. The topics are: placing our trust in God; Christ in the Eucharist; God also dwells in every Christian.

- Placing our trust in God
- Christ in the Eucharist
- God also dwells in every Christian

OTHER CIVILIZATIONS of the time admired the beauty of the Temple in Jerusalem. After its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar and the deportation to Babylon, the Temple was rebuilt with great effort, thanks to the faith of the Hebrew people. The new temple dated back to 536 B.C. The book of Maccabees recounts how it was restored for the worship of the Lord after it had been profaned. In the time of Jesus, King Herod had reformed and expanded the complex. For the Jews, despite all its historical vicissitudes, the Temple continued to be a source of pride and fidelity to the covenant with God.

Because of all this, fear and surprise seized Jesus's listeners when He revealed that the Temple would be destroyed again in a few years. It was an obvious danger, and, since Jesus was the source of the warning, they had even more reason to be unsettled by it. "We can imagine the

effect these words had on Jesus' disciples. However, he did not want to insult the temple, but rather make it understood — to them as well as to us today — that human structures, even the most sacred, are fleeting, and we should not place our security in them. How many supposedly definitive certainties have we had in our lives, which later were revealed to be ephemeral!”^[1]

“‘He that dwells in the aid of the Most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven.’ This is the risky security of the Christian,” St. Josemaria remarked. “We must be convinced that God hears us, that he is concerned about us. If we are, we will feel completely at peace. But living with God is indeed a risky business, for he will not share things: he wants everything. And if we move toward him, it means we must be ready for a new conversion, to take new bearings, to listen more

attentively to his inspirations — those holy desires that he provokes in every soul — and to put them into practice.”^[2]

WITH THE institution of the Church, the Temple at which to worship God became the very Body of Christ and, in a particular way, his presence in the Eucharist. Holy Communion is the “place” where He awaits us. “The bread you see on the altar,” St. Augustine said, “sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ; the chalice, or rather, what the chalice contains, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ. In this form, our Lord Jesus Christ wanted to leave us his body and blood, which He shed for us for the remission of our sins. If you receive it properly, you will become what you receive.”^[3]

“The Church draws her life from the Eucharist. This truth does not simply express a daily experience of faith, but recapitulates the heart of the mystery of the Church. In a variety of ways she joyfully experiences the constant fulfillment of the promise: ‘Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age’ (Mt 28:20), but in the Holy Eucharist, through the changing of bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord, she rejoices in this presence with unique intensity.”^[4]

Indeed, men experience Jesus’s sacramental presence as a foretaste of eternity – and even more so in this month of the faithful departed, during which we have dreamed of heaven, where God, our Mother Mary, the saints, and our loved ones await us. Receiving communion, and the time we spend in thanksgiving after communion, gives us a foretaste of that joy. Each Tabernacle in which Jesus is hidden is a source

of light that never goes out, like the city lights that turn the bird's-eye view of the streets into a glowing web at night.

JESUS DWELLS in every Christian's heart. We know that we are temples of the Holy Spirit and, in a certain way, we do not need to go anywhere else to meet and speak with God. Nothing should frighten us. If, perhaps, we are saddened by the possibility of offending Him, even that does not lead us to live in fear: we always have the possibility of being forgiven. God's love is so great that it leads Him to willingly forget our offenses and forgive us.

Nothing will take away our peace when we live a state of joy because of all the "places" we find God's presence, even if our difficulties are

great or very painful. *If God is with us, who can be against us? (Rom 8:31)*. Inner serenity, strength in the midst of adversity, is a gift that arises from experiencing God's constant closeness. Everything that happens around us is an opportunity to bring everything to the Lord.

“We are contemplative souls, in constant dialogue, in contact with God at all times, from the first thought of the day to the last thought at night,” St. Josemaria says. “We live out of love: our hearts are always in Jesus Christ our Lord, reaching him through his Mother, Holy Mary, and, through him, to the Father and the Holy Spirit.”^[5]

^[1] Pope Francis, Angelus, 13-XI-2016.

^[2] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 58.

^[3] St. Augustine, Sermon 227.

^[4] St. John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 1.

^[5] St. Josemaría, *Collected Letters* 2, no. 59b.

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