

Meditations: Tuesday of the Twenty-Ninth Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the twenty-ninth week of Ordinary Time. The topics are: a vigilant heart; the center of our hopes; infusing everyday routines with love.

- A vigilant heart
 - The center of our hopes
 - Infusing everyday routines with love
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JESUS ONCE warned his disciples: *Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning (Lk 12:35)*. The wide garments that the Jews wore were girded at the waist when they traveled or engaged in specific tasks, so Jesus's words are an invitation to be ready to perform a task or set out on a journey. Likewise, keeping the lamps burning meant awaiting a visitor or remaining watchful and attentive for some other important reason.

Jesus exhorted his disciples to be vigilant through these everyday examples. On one hand, this exhortation has to do with the Christian disposition while awaiting Jesus's final coming. On the other hand, "it can be understood also as the normal attitude to have in the conduct of life, so that our good choices, taken at times after challenging discernment, may proceed in a persevering and

consistent manner, and bear fruit.”^[1]
Vigilance leads us to safeguard the gift of the vocation that God has given us so that our actions and feelings align with it.

A sleepy soul, in contrast, is unmoved by its surroundings and trusts in its ability to control things. This drowsiness can lead the soul “to continue in the self-satisfaction of its own comfortable existence. Yet this deadening of souls, this lack of vigilance [...] is what gives the Evil One power in the world.”^[2] Jesus does not call the apostles to calm complacency about the good they have already done; He invites them, rather, to remain vigilant at all times so that their hearts do not stray from Him. This vigilance will lead them to humility because they do not trust in themselves but in God, who watches over them.

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JESUS LIKENS this vigilance to the attitude of servants waiting for their master. They know that he will arrive sooner or later and that this encounter will change their lives: when he comes, they will no longer be treated as servants but as equals: *He will have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them (Lk 12:37).* Christ knows that “we need the greater and lesser hopes that keep us going day by day. But these are not enough without the great hope, which must surpass everything else. This great hope can only be God, who encompasses the whole of reality and who can bestow upon us what we, by ourselves, cannot attain.”^[3] Jesus is the master for whom Christians are keeping watch, and his arrival will offer us a life far greater than we can imagine.

In our daily lives, we may place our hopes in realities that fill us with excitement: plans with the family,

outings with friends, celebrations, and so on. In this sense, the Prelate of Opus Dei points out, “Setting our hopes on the daily encounter with Jesus in the tabernacle: this will be a sign of true love.” He adds that we can also bring our more ordinary hopes and unite them with the Eucharist: “Making the tabernacle the center on which all our hopes converge will be a sure way of growing in love for Christ.”^[4] Only Jesus can satisfy our deepest longings for happiness. While we await his arrival, we can begin to enjoy this joy in everyday things when we savor them in union with Him.

“I LOVE to speak of paths and ways,” St. Josemaria preached, “because we are travellers, journeying to our home in Heaven, our Father's land. But don't forget that, though a path

may have some particularly difficult stretches, and may occasionally involve wading across a river or passing through an almost impenetrable wood, as a rule it will be quite passable and hold no surprises for us. The danger lies in routine, in imagining that God cannot be here, in the things of each instant, because they are so simple and ordinary!”^[5] Sometimes monotony prevents us from realizing what we have at hand. Since we do virtually the same thing every day, it's easy to become accustomed to it and fail to realize that the realities around us — work, family, friendships, etc. — are much greater than they seem at first glance. God is waiting for us in them.

St. Paul concludes his letter to the Corinthians with these words: *Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love* (1 Cor 16:13-14).

Vigilance leads us to infuse everything we do with love. Thus each day can be different, an expression of renewed love, unique to that day and carrying eternal value. “Go about your professional duties for Love's sake. Do everything for the sake of Love and (precisely because you are in love, even though you may taste the bitterness of misunderstanding, of injustice, of ingratitude and even of failure in men's eyes) you will see the result in the wonders that your work produces — rich, abundant fruit, the promise of eternity!”^[6] We can ask the our Lady to help us overcome routine by turning everything we do into an act of love for her Son.

^[1] Pope Francis, Audience, 14-XII-2022.

[2] Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Volume II, Ignatius Press, 2011, pg. 153.

[3] Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, no. 31.

[4] Msgr. Fernando Ocáriz, *In the Light of the Gospel*, “The Center of Our Hopes,” Scepter, p. 117.

[5] St. Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 313.

[6] *Ibid*, no. 68.