

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

Some reflection that can assist our prayer during the 23rd week of Ordinary Time.

- Priority of prayer
- Fraternal prayer
- Welcoming Jesus in communion

ST. LUKE tells us that Jesus spent the entire night in prayer before

choosing his apostles. Before a number of important events, we see our Lord immersed in a personal dialogue with his Father. He will do so again, for example, years later, in the Garden of Olives. When praying during the night about the Passion He will soon undergo, Jesus asks for strength to always fulfill God's will.

Our Lord shows us the need He himself had to be in close union with his Father God's will, especially when confronting a situation that requires great light, consolation and strength. As Saint Josemaría said, thanks to prayer we can transform our entire day into an "intimate and trusting conversation with him. I have said and written this so many times, but I don't mind saying it again, because our Lord has shown us by his example that this is exactly what we have to do: we have to pray at all times, from morning to night and from night to morning. When

everything goes well: ‘Thank you, my God!’ If we are having a hard time, ‘Lord, do not abandon me!’”^[1]

A good father is interested in even the smallest details in his child’s life. Even if he has already heard them hundreds of times, he shows ever-renewed affection and concern. Therefore we should always go to our Father God in heaven with great trust. When we offer Him even the smallest events in our day, He makes them his own, and they take on the infinite value of his Son’s sacrifice. “All our petitions were gathered up, once for all, in his cry on the Cross and, in his Resurrection, heard by the Father. This is why he never ceases to intercede for us with the Father.”^[2]

WE DON’T KNOW the exact content of Jesus’ prayer that night before

choosing his apostles. But it is easy to imagine that He called to mind each of them, with a great desire that they be fruitful and happy in spreading the good news of salvation. “The calling of the disciples is a prayer event; it is as if they were begotten in prayer, in intimacy with the Father. This is also the necessary starting point for understanding Jesus’ words: ‘Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest’ (Mt 9:38). We cannot simply pick the laborers in God’s harvest in the same way that an employer seeks his employees. God must always be asked for them and he himself must choose them for this service; they must always be requested of God and chosen by him for this service.”^[3]

A person’s life is never an isolated verse; we all need human relationships with others. So it is only natural that names and faces

come up in our prayer, especially of those closest to us, people who are part of our daily life and whose happiness we desire. Thus these relationships will open up to divine action, and we will invite God to be more present in these bonds. And we will experience a joy “produced by deep harmony among people, which allows them to savor the beauty of being together, of supporting each other on life’s journey.”^[4]

It is only natural that we find it easier to relate to certain people, whether because we have a similar character or because we share the same interests and tastes. But knowing that we are children of the same Father “will lead us to deepen our relationships with our brothers; to not let ourselves be led only by things we have in common and to overcome any human barriers we may have, trying to see Christ in each one.”^[5]

WHEN WE RECEIVE Jesus in the Eucharist, we are in the best “position” to intercede before God for any intention in the name of his Son. We can experience, firsthand, what Saint Luke tells us: “And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came forth from him and healed them all” (*Lk 6:19*). This can be a good moment to call to mind, as Jesus did, the people we wish to help; and also to fill our heart with thanksgiving because He has wanted to rely on us, and even for the very fact that we are able to pray: “Father, I thank you that you have heard me” (*Jn 11:41*). We may also experience more clearly our unworthiness or the limits of our possibilities, just as the centurion did who wanted his servant to be healed: “Only say this word, and my servant will be healed” (*Mt 8:8*).

When we are about to be received by an important person, we want to prepare what we are going to say so that we won't forget it at that moment, overcome by emotion. We can try to do something similar when we are preparing for our encounter with our Lord in the Eucharist; we can store up the intentions throughout the day that we want to bring to Him. "Have you ever thought about how you would prepare to receive Him if you could only receive Communion once in your life?"^[6] Saint Josemaría asked. And in another place he added: "We should receive our Lord in the Eucharist as we would prepare to receive the great ones of the earth, or even better: with decorations, with lights, with new clothes. And if you ask me what sort of cleanliness I mean, what decorations and what lights you should bring, I will answer you: cleanliness in each one of your

senses, decoration in each of your powers, light in all your soul.”^[7]

Our Lady was the first one to receive Jesus. We can ask her to obtain for us the grace needed to welcome her Son’s love with the same purity, humility and devotion that she did.

^[1] St. Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 247.

^[2] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2741.

^[3] Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, I, p. 170.

^[4] Francis, Angelus, 27 December 2015.

^[5] Monsigor Fernando Ocáriz, Get-together, 25 June 2022.

^[6] St. Josemaría, Meditation, 14 April 1960.

^[7] St. Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 834.

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