

Meditations: Sunday of the Eleventh Week of Ordinary Time (Year A)

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the 11th week of Ordinary Time.

- Remembering the joy of encountering God
 - Workers for the harvest
 - Proclaiming the Gospel to those closest to us
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WHEN the Israelites camped in front of Mount Sinai, Moses began ascending the mountain to speak with God. The Lord, who had witnessed the doubts and difficulties Israel faced after fleeing Egypt, reaffirmed the covenant He had established with his people: “If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” And as a sign of his love for them, God reminded them of what they had recently experienced: “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself” (Ex 19:2-6a).

Looking back on our own lives, we can recall moments when we felt God’s presence in a special way, circumstances when his closeness was more evident and perhaps filled

us with unparalleled joy. These memories may contrast with a recent or current situation. Like the people of Israel, we too go through periods of desert hardships, experiences that weary us or adversities that try to rob us of hope.

God, who knows these difficulties, asks us to turn our eyes to his saving action, to trust in the many miracles He has already done for us, how He has freed us, like Israel, from slavery. “He asks us to relive that moment, that situation, that experience in which we encountered the Lord, felt his love, and received a new and luminous perspective on ourselves, on reality, on the mystery of life.”^[1]
Like the chosen people, we need to nourish our hope with the memory and remembrance of Jesus’ action in our souls. “If you recover your first love, with the wonder and joy of encountering God, you will go forward.”^[2]

JESUS came into this world to save all men and women. Therefore He cannot help but feel compassion when He sees people wearied or abandoned, with no one to turn to. Our Lord longs to reach every person who is seeking Him. And to do so, He wants to rely on the mediation of other shepherds who, like Him, are eager to care for the sheep scattered throughout the world. Hence He addresses his disciples saying: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Mt 9:37-38).

Our Lord is relying on each one of us to quench souls' thirst for God, to proclaim the Good News of salvation. And this mission requires looking on people with compassion, as Jesus did: with a look that excludes no one and

that leads us to giving ourselves courageously and without reservation. Every day we can help spread the Gospel message to others, primarily through our authentic lives filled with joy and concern, with a charity that embraces our neighbor in each one's specific circumstances. "That cry of the Son of God, lamenting that the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few, is always relevant. How it tears at our heartstrings! Christ's cry was meant for you too. How have you responded to it up to now? Do you pray at least daily for that intention?"^[3]

WHEN CHRIST sent the apostles to announce the coming of the kingdom of heaven and to heal the sick, He told them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the

Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 10:5-6). Certainly, this did not mean that only the Jews could receive the Good News. Later, Jesus would preach in Samaria, and many Gentiles would receive the faith. But our Lord wanted the message of salvation to reach his people first, by virtue of the covenant established with them. Thus the renewed Israel would be the seed of the new people of God.

Christ also calls us to announce the Gospel first to those closest to us: our family, friends, and coworkers. God willed that we be sanctified and saved not “merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather has it pleased Him to bring men and women together as one people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness.”^[4] — Therefore we live according to the Gospel when

we strive to share the joy of the Christian message with those around us. “No one is saved alone, as an isolated individual. Rather, God draws us to himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in a human community.”^[5] —

Mothers hold a special place in every family. They don't hesitate to do whatever is necessary for the good of their children. The Church is a people that also has a mother: Mary. Our Lady will help us to carry out our mission as apostles without calculations, bearing witness with our own lives to the joy of the Gospel.

^[1] — Francis, Homily, 8 April 2023.

^[2] — Ibid.

^[3] — Saint Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 906.

^[4] — Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, On the Church, 9.

^[5] Francis, *Gaudete et exsultate*, no. 6

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