

Meditations: Wednesday of the Ninth Week of Ordinary Time

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

- Sincerely seeking God's truth
- Longing for eternity
- With all your heart and all your mind

ENCOUNTERS WITH other people are among the most powerful forces that

shape our lives. Sometimes they are planned in advance and sometimes they arise unexpectedly; both types of encounters can generate friendships with the power to change our lives. The Gospel recounts some of Jesus's encounters with his contemporaries. There are simple people, like the Samaritan woman, who were completely transformed by an apparently chance encounter. There are also important figures, like Nicodemus, who sought Jesus out for conversation to deepen their knowledge of God. And there are others who approach Him not to learn but to question and find contradictions between his preaching and the Scriptures.

This is what the Sadducees do. They do not believe in the resurrection and approach Jesus with a test. The case they put before Him seems implausible, at least to our modern eyes: if a woman has several

husbands and all of them die, whose wife will she be after the resurrection of the dead (cf. *Mk* 12:19-23)? The Sadducees are not really seeking the truth; they don't pose the question to learn or change. They do not realize that "God is always greater than we imagine Him to be. His works are surprising compared to our calculations; His actions are different, always, they exceed our needs and expectations; and therefore, we must never stop seeking Him and converting to His true face."^[1]

When we see the Sadducees' attitude, we can ask ourselves whether we honestly seek God's truth. Do we run the risk of having to change our beliefs and relinquish our prejudices? Do we raise our eyes from the often twisted paths we tread, to contemplate God's greatness?

JESUS SAID to them, "Is not the reason why you go wrong that you understand neither scriptures nor the power of God?" For when they rise from the dead, men and women do not marry; no, they are like the angels in heaven (Mk 12:24-25). And to make it clear that resurrection is a fundamental part of the divine plan, and that both the body and soul will find life after death, He assures them that the God of their fathers is *God, not of the dead, but of the living* (Mk 12:27).

Throughout history, man has often wondered what awaited him after death. The Gospel, which is the ever-timely word of God, answers this question. Jesus tells us that life does not end when we come to the close of our earthly journeys. We are called to be "like God forever;"^[2] we are not created for death but for eternal life

in heaven, which is not a physical place somewhere above us but a new dimension within which our deepest aspirations will be fulfilled. "God knows and loves the 'whole person' that we currently are. Therefore, what grows and develops in our life is immortal even now. It is in our body that we suffer and love, that we hope, that we experience joy and sadness, that we progress throughout time."^[3]

That is why St. Josemaria encouraged us to carry out all our activities, even those that seem small and unimportant, "with a lively awareness of eternity."^[4] There is more behind each job well done, thoughtful act, or short prayer than can be seen with the naked eye. Nothing we do is lost; every act can prepare us to contemplate God face-to-face in eternal life.

ST. AUGUSTINE, moved by a desire to know and love God more deeply, threw himself into philosophy and the study of revealed truth. There is a story about him walking on the seashore, reflecting on the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. He saw a little boy running from the shore to the sea, filling a little bucket with water, and returning to empty the water into a hole in the sand. When St. Augustine asked him what he was doing, the child explained that he wanted to empty the sea into the hole. St. Augustine told him the project was impossible, but the child told him that his project — trying to comprehend the mystery of God — was even more difficult.

"Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by

knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves."^[5] We contemplate God like that, as He commanded the people of Israel to do: *You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind* (Mt 22:37).

"What is left of your heart for loving yourself? What is left of your soul, of your mind? He says 'the whole.' He who made you requires you to give yourself completely."^[6]

St. Josemaria said that the Christian's life is marked by a filial relationship with God and the desire to know Him deeply. "We are to be pious, then, as pious as children, but not ignorant. Insofar as possible, each of us should study the faith seriously, rigorously — all of which means theology. Ours should be the piety of children and the sure doctrine of theologians."^[7] We can ask the Virgin Mary to help us approach her Son with

confidence, eager to know and love Him more each day.

^[1] Pope Francis, Angelus, 11-XII-2022.

^[2] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1023.

^[3] Ratzinger, J., *Co-Workers of the Truth*.

^[4] St. Josemaria, *Friends of God*, no. 239.

^[5] St. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, Introduction.

^[6] St. Augustine, Sermon 24 (quoted in *Christ is Passing By*, no. 59).

^[7] St. Josemaria, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 10.

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