

Meditations: Sunday of the Fifth Week of Easter (Year A)

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during this time of Easter.

- We can always trust Jesus
- Created for heaven
- Looking at our own life

JESUS knows that in a few hours He will be captured by the soldiers, so He is preparing for the Passion. He decides to spend his final moments with those He has shared the most time with, those He loves in a special

way: the apostles. At the end of the Last Supper, Jesus opens up his heart to them. Though perfectly aware of the suffering, sadness and abandonment soon to come, He does not want his disciples to become discouraged: *Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me* (Jn 14:1).

This is the key that our Lord gives his disciples in order to face what is to come: to trust in Him. This advice might first strike us as a bit vague, but in reality it responds to an essential human need: the need for clear reference points, the need to lean on someone. When someone, for example, gets lost walking through a city, they first try to locate a place that is familiar to them, and start out from there again. Jesus advises the apostles to do the same when they feel lost in the upcoming days of his Passion: to believe in Him. That is, to realize that his

suffering will not be in vain, but, as He had told them, it will be undertaken to give us a new and much richer life.

Like the apostles, we too can experience situations in which we sense Jesus' absence. Tiredness, misunderstandings, or illness can sap our strength and lead us to think we are alone. And it is precisely in those moments that our Lord asks us to trust in Him, "to lean not on ourselves but on him. Because liberation from being troubled depends upon entrusting ourselves. Entrusting ourselves to Jesus, taking the 'leap.' And this is liberation from feeling troubled. Jesus is risen and lives in order to be always by our side. We can say to him, 'Jesus, I believe that you rose again and are beside me. I believe that you listen to me. I bring to you what upsets me, my troubles; I have faith in you and I entrust myself to you.'"^[1]

IN HIS FAREWELL address during the Last Supper, Jesus also gives another reason for consolation during the days of his Passion: *In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also (Jn 14:2-3)*. Our Lord is preparing to die in order to reserve a place for us in heaven, a place that exceeds anything we can imagine. We only know that it will last forever (although time itself is also a mystery for us) and that we will be together with God.

Christ's resurrection was not just an ordinary miracle. It did not simply involve restoring life to a dead body, as had happened before with Lazarus (cf. *Jn 11:1-44*) or the young

man from Nain (cf. *Lk* 7:11-17). For they both would one day die again. Jesus has broken the chains “to reach a totally new type of life, a life that is no longer subject to the law of becoming and death, but that transcends all this; a life that has inaugurated a new dimension for mankind.”^[2] —

In inaugurating this new dimension, the life that Jesus has won for us is not a question of seeking suffering here on earth in order to later find happiness in Paradise. All the saints, in many different settings and times, have been very happy people. Hence Saint Josemaría wrote that “happiness in heaven is for those who know how to be happy on earth.”^[3] — Christ has prepared for us a future that illumines our present life and fills with joy also our journey here on earth. Thus we can recognize God’s love in every situation: in poverty and in wealth, in honor and

in slander, in health and in sickness, in peace and in persecution. At every moment of our life we are preparing ourselves for that new home because, in reality, we were created for heaven (cf. *Phil* 4:11-13).

THOMAS responds to Jesus' words with a question filled with common sense: *Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?* (*Jn* 14:5). Indeed, our Lord's two pieces of advice – to trust in Him and the promise of heaven – do not seem so easy to put into practice. Thomas, like anyone, is looking for a bit more security. It's like asking oneself, "How will I know if I'm really following God, or simply convincing myself that this is the right thing to do when it really isn't?"

Philip also wants more confirmation and says: *Show us the Father, and it will be enough for us (Jn 14:8)*. But Jesus replies with a question: *Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me? (Jn 14:9)*. Christ wants the apostle to find the answer by looking at his own life. The experience of his relationship with Jesus is much more convincing than any words. The memory of the events they had lived together – the joy when He called Philip to follow Him, the first miracles, the conversations alone with our Lord – is what will lead him to trust in Jesus when trying moments such as the Passion arise.

The events of Easter should “take us back to the grace of our own past; it brings us back to Galilee, where our love story with Jesus began, where the first call took place. In other words, it asks us to relive that moment, that situation, that

experience in which we met the Lord, experienced his love and received a radiantly new way of seeing ourselves, the world around us and the mystery of life itself”^[4]
Then it will be easier for us to trust in Jesus and his promises. Our Lady would have frequently called to mind the special moments in her life related to her Son. Mary will help us to never lose sight of the love that has given us a new life and continues to do so.

^[1] Francis, *Regina Caeli*, 10 May 2020.

^[2] Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Vol. III, p. 274.

^[3] Saint Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 1005.

^[4] Francis, Homily, 8 April 2023.

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