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

Some reflections that can assist our prayer as we draw near to the close of the Easter season.

05/14/2023

- Divine indwelling in the soul
- The Holy Spirit and peace
- With the fire of the Holy Spirit

THE EASTER SEASON is drawing to a close. Throughout these weeks we

have recalled some encounters of the Risen Christ with the apostles and the holy women. With the Ascension and Pentecost approaching, the Church invites us to prepare our hearts for these two solemnities. In the Gospel we read Jesus' words of farewell during the Last Supper: *"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him"* (Jn 14:23).

Jesus makes known how greatly God loves us, by revealing the mystery of the divine indwelling in the soul. We are called to be the temple and dwelling place of the Holy Trinity. "What closer communion with God could we aspire to? What greater proof could God give us of his desire to enter into communion with us? The entire history of Christian mysticism, even with all its sublime expressions, can only speak imperfectly to us of this ineffable

presence of God in the depths of the soul.”^[1] —

God wants us to know how close He is to us. He is not satisfied with being next to us: he wants to be inside, filling our hearts with his presence. “God is here with us, really present, living,” Saint Josemaría wrote. “He sees and hears us. He guides us, and knows our smallest deeds, our most hidden intentions.”^[2] — Remembering this reality frequently will help us to experience his presence, to be faithful in the small and big things that make up our daily life: “By treating Him in this way, with this intimacy, you will become a good child of God and a great friend of his: on the street, in the square, in your business, in your profession, in your ordinary life.”^[3] —

“THESE THINGS I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (Jn 14:25-26). The Church, born from Christ’s Paschal Mystery, is continually guided and animated by the Holy Spirit. During her journey through history, despite all of mankind’s frailties, the assistance of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity never ceases.

Facing Jesus’ imminent departure, the apostles may well have been unsettled. The contrast between the magnitude of the mission entrusted to them and their own abilities was so obvious. How were they going to fulfill his mandate to spread his word throughout the whole world? Hence Jesus, after announcing the sending of the Holy Spirit, seeks to instill serenity in his disciples: *“Peace*

I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (Jn 14:27).

With the Holy Spirit, Jesus gives them peace. A peace that is a gift from God, which is why it goes beyond what we can achieve with human efforts alone. Often in this world “there is only an appearance of peace, a balance created by fear and precarious compromises.”^[4] In contrast, the peace that our Lord gives us is above all a consequence of the charity that the Paraclete pours into our hearts (cf. *Rom 5:5*). “The peace of the Lord follows the way of meekness and the cross; it is taking responsibility for others. Indeed, Christ took on himself our evil, our sin and our death. He took all of this upon himself. In this way he freed us. He paid for us. His peace is not

the fruit of some compromise, but rather is born of self-giving.”^[5] —

THE ACTION of the Paraclete in the early days of the Church is seen clearly at the Council of Jerusalem. *It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us....* (Acts 15:28). The apostles and presbyters had met to resolve a controversy on the best way to evangelize all peoples, including non-Jewish Christians. Besides this specific problem, the sacred text shows the enthusiasm with which the early Church spread the faith, seconding the Paraclete's inspirations.

This continuously renewed missionary impulse is seen throughout the Church's entire history. And it is a reason for hope in the evangelizing mission in which we

too are immersed. “The Spirit accompanies the Church on her long pilgrimage between Christ’s first and second coming. ‘I go away, and I will come to you’ (Jn 14:28), Jesus tells his Apostles. Between Christ’s ‘going away’ and his ‘return’ is the time of the Church, his Body – the two thousand years that have now gone by. The time of the Church, the time of the Spirit. The Spirit is the Teacher who guides the disciples and leads them to love Jesus. He leads them to listen to his word, to contemplate his face.”^[6]

During his first years as a priest, Saint Josemaría kept some pictures in his breviary to mark the pages. One day he realized he was becoming attached to them and replaced them with some small pieces of paper, on which he later wrote: *Ure igne Sancti Spiritus!* Enkindle with the fire of the Holy Spirit! “I have used them for many

years,” he said, “and each time I read them, it was like saying to the Holy Spirit: enkindle me! Make me a burning ember!”^[7] With these same desires we can prepare ourselves, persevering in prayer together with Mary (cf. *Acts* 1:14), to receive the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Thus, enkindled by our love for God and neighbor, we will be able to spread God’s warmth to all men and women, as the apostles did.

^[1] Saint John Paul II, Homily, 5 May 1986.

^[2] Saint Josemaría, *Furrow*, no. 658.

^[3] Saint Josemaría, Notes taken at a get-together, 17 November 1972.

^[4] Saint Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 73.

^[5] Francis, Audience, 13 April 2022.

^[6] Benedict XVI, Homily, 13 May 2007.

^[7] Salvador Bernal, *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer*, Rialp, 1980, p. 337.

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