

# **Meditations: Tuesday of the Third Week of Ordinary Time**

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the third week of ordinary time. The topics are: the key that unlocks the door to holiness; a guide to a happy life; a docile heart.

- The key that unlocks the door to holiness
  - A guide to a happy life
  - A docile heart
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A LARGE crowd surrounds Jesus. His public life has only just begun, but it has already stirred a range of emotions. Many listen attentively, moved by the miracles He performs. Others, however, are already plotting against Him because He has presented Himself as the Son of God and declared that man is more important than the Sabbath. The crowd is so vast that even his Mother and his disciples cannot reach Him. When Jesus is told that his family is looking for Him, He responds, *Who are my mother and my brothers?* Then He says, *These are my mother and my brothers: whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother (Mk 3:33–35).*

At first glance, Jesus' question might seem to betray indifference, as if He didn't know who his mother and brothers were. However, his subsequent statement reveals the foundation of his kinship with them.

It is not limited to those who are close to Him or whom He trusts most: anyone seeking to do God's will can share in that closeness with Him. His disciples are those who have placed their expectations and hopes in the Lord, shaping their lives around the Lord's desires. While they must gradually purify their understanding of following the Master, they recognize that with Him, they will discover God's will for their lives. Walking with Him must become the focal point of their existence.

This is the key to unlocking the door to holiness: living according to God's will.<sup>[1]</sup> As Christ says elsewhere, *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven (Mt 7:21).*

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JESUS TELLS his followers repeatedly that his priority is to fulfill His Father's will. Even as a child, after He stays behind in the Temple in Jerusalem, He asks Mary and Joseph, *Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?* (Lk 2:49). Later, He declares that his nourishment is to do the will of the One who sent Him (cf. Jn 4:34). This desire directed his whole life.

Those who strive to imitate Christ might not always know what God wants from them. And even when they do, they may feel resistance. In such moments, it is consoling to remember that Jesus Himself experienced a similar struggle in Gethsemane, grappling with the tension between His human strength and His Father's will: *If it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as You will* (Mt 26:39). He understood the enormity of what He was being asked to do. Yet his desire

to fulfill his Father's will outweighed the burden.

Jesus' love for his Father's will gave Him a clear perspective on earthly realities: *My judgment is just, for I seek not my will but the will of Him who sent me (Jn 5:30)*. This is the principle that enables us to lead a happy life, for God desires our well-being both on earth and in heaven. No one understands how to build true happiness, which often includes sacrifice and suffering, better than God does. Loving his will is not about merely complying with conditions for the sake of a future reward but about trusting in the goodness of his plans for us. His will is for our joy—imperfect in this life but full in eternity. As St. John writes, *We have come to know and believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God in him (1 Jn 4:16)*.

ST. JOSEMARÍA often spoke about intelligent obedience: “God does not impose a blind obedience on us.”<sup>[2]</sup> This virtue does not mean blindly carrying out another’s request. It involves using one’s abilities to fulfill the task with intention and care. In the Garden of Olives, Jesus evaluates how to act in response to His Father’s request. By aligning His human will fully with God’s, “Jesus tells us that it is only by conforming our own will to the divine one that human beings attain their true height, that they become ‘divine.’”<sup>[3]</sup>

At times, naturally, we do not know God’s will. This is why we seek spiritual direction, turning to a person who can give us good advice. It may not always be easy to accept the things they say, especially when they clash with our initial thoughts. The person advising us is not

infallible, and no one can perfectly communicate God's will. But we know that we, too, are fallible and can misjudge. While the advice we receive might not necessarily align fully with God's plan, the Lord values our willingness to accept it in love.

The prophet Samuel conveyed this truth to Saul after his disobedience: *Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice* (1 Sam 15:22). Thus the prophet "clarified the hierarchy of values: It is more important to have a docile heart and to obey, than to offer sacrifices, to fast, to do penance."<sup>[4]</sup> —

After finding Jesus in the Temple, St. Luke tells us that Mary and Joseph did not understand what had happened. However, he also tells us that *Mary treasured all these things in her heart* (Lk 2:51). She pondered

what had taken place to discern why God allowed it. Indeed, some events can only be understood with time. Mary, in her obedience, trusted in God's will.

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[1] Cf. St. Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 754.

[2] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 17.

[3] Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, 1-II-2012.

[4] Pope Francis, Homily, 20-I-2020.

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