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God's Way of Reasoning

A meditation given by Saint Josemaria in Rome on 6 January 1970, feast of the Epiphany.

01/05/2022

GOD'S WAY OF REASONING[1]

Ubi est qui natus est rex iudaeorum?

[2] Christ has just been born, and already his kingship is acknowledged: Where is the newborn king of the Jews? Some men

have come from the East to adore him. They are powerful men, perhaps princes or sages. And they let themselves be led by an external sign that seems quite insufficient. They had received a call, a message that was not very precise: a star of unusual brightness. But they offered no resistance. From a human point of view, it didn't make much sense for them to set out on a journey for points unknown. And it made even less sense to ask in Jerusalem, where another king reigned: *Ubi est rex iudaeorum?* Where is the king of the Jews?

My children, in your life and mine there are also many things that don't always make sense. We too have seen a light. We too have heard a call. We too have shared with these men a quest leading us to take certain decisions that perhaps seemed unreasonable to our loved ones, to those at our side. From a human

point of view they were right. But you and I could say: *Vidimus stellam eius...*,[3] we have seen his star and have come to adore him.

Human reasoning and divine reasoning

Who can say exactly how a person first decides to give himself? Who can say when this open-heartedness, this lack logic, as I call it, is first born? I have my own experience and each of you has yours. We know that our dedication must be renewed every moment, every day, and on occasions many times a day having perhaps lost the naive simplicity of the early stages. We have drawn close to Christ and we have felt his Heart beating strongly, oh so strongly! And we have come to taste his delights; as we find him *delighting in the sons of men*[4]. From all this we know the great value of God's love.

Yes, we have to renew our self-giving; we have to pronounce once more the words, 'Lord, I love you', and to say them with all our heart. Even though our feelings may not respond, we say to him with the warmth of grace and with our will: My Jesus, king of the universe, we love you.

I want to stress the lack of human logic present in our lives ... Not for nothing did we leave all those things behind; the Magi did the same, forgoing even the place where they lived, where perhaps they were powerful and esteemed as important people. We have not left personal interests behind for nothing. Now we know very clearly that the divine reason that stirred us and woke us from our slumber is truly worthwhile. It is worthwhile being faithful, being so deeply in love that there is no room in our lives for fear.

Love for the Church

Each of us must confess in the depths of our heart: Lord, I beg your forgiveness for my sins. Then we can go to him with absolute filial trust — the trust that this Father deserves. I will never tire of saying that he loves each of us as a mother loves her child... Much more, not 'as much as', much more than a mother loves her child, than a father loves his first-born son. Now is the time to tell this all-powerful, all-wise God, who is our Father, who has loved us each one of us — unto death and death on a cross — that we will never lose our peace even though things may appear to get worse. We, my children, will calmly continue on our way, because God our Lord will not let his Church be destroyed. He will not allow the imprints of his divine footsteps in the world to be erased ...

And once again, without naming things aloud, I ask you to take certain situations in hand. Lord, you have

given us a mind with which to reason and to serve you better. We, on our part, must do everything possible: persisting stubbornly and perseveringly in prayer, recalling the words you yourself addressed to us: *Ask, and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you* (Mt 7:7).

The 'trinity' on earth

The Magi arrived in Bethlehem. The apocryphal Gospels – which don't merit faith, but do ordinarily merit pious consideration – tell us how they placed their gifts at the feet of the Child. They are lost in adoration on finding the long-sought king, not in a royal palace nor surrounded by numerous servants, but in a manger, between an ox and a donkey, wrapped in swaddling clothes, in the arms of his Mother and St Joseph, like any other new-born baby.

The passage of St Matthew's Gospel which the Church sets before us today concludes: *And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.*^[5] They were outstanding men for their time, men of recognized learning, but still they heed a dream. Again their conduct is not logical. There are so many things in our life that are humanly illogical, but so full of God's logic.

My children, let us draw close to the group that we call the trinity on earth: Jesus, Mary and Joseph. I imagine myself hiding in a corner; I don't dare to draw near to Jesus, because my wretchedness, past and present, rises up against me. I feel deeply ashamed, but I also realize that Jesus is casting affectionate glance in my direction. I then go to his Mother and St Joseph, that man who was so neglected for many centuries and who acted as his father

here on earth. And I say to Jesus: Lord I want to be really yours, so that my thoughts, my deeds, my entire life, are for you. But as you know, this wretched human condition has led me astray so often.

I wish I had been yours from the very start, from the first beat of my heart, from the first moment my mind started to reason. I am not worthy to be — and without your help I will never be — your brother, your son and your love. You indeed are my brother and my love, and I am also your son.

And if I can't lift Christ up and hug him to my breast, I will make myself small. That we can all do, and it is very much in keeping with the family nature of our spirit. I will make myself very small and go to Mary. If she has her Son Jesus in her right arm, then I, who am her son too, will also find a place there. The Mother of

God will embrace me with her other arm and will squeeze us both together against her heart.

Forgive me, my children, if the things I say appear silly. But isn't it true that we are contemplatives?

Considerations of this sort can help us, if necessary, to recover life, and can give us lots of consolation and strength.

Before God, and above all, before the Christ Child, helpless and needy, everything is purity; and I will see that, though I do have the savage possibility, like all men, of offending him and acting like an animal, it's not a disaster if it helps us to struggle, to express our love, and teaches us how to behave fraternally towards all mankind and all creation.

Serving Jesus

We need to be always making acts of contrition, of reform, of improvement: continually advancing. Yes, Lord, who listens to us now: after the human race fell through the sin of our first parents, you permitted this creature called man to behave so brutally. And so, if at any stage I cannot be close beside you in your Mother's arms, I will place myself beside the ox and the donkey there with you in the stable. I will be the family dog. There I will be, looking at you tenderly, ready to defend the house. And at your side I will find the purifying warmth and the love of God to transform the beast we all bear within us into a son of God, something immeasurably superior to any earthly dignity.

This is our life, my children, the life of a good and honest little donkey, who at times rolls on the floor and brays away with his legs in the air. But ordinarily he is faithful and

carries meekly whatever is placed upon him; and he puts up with a simple diet, not very plentiful and always the same; and he has a tough skin for working. I am moved by the image of the loyal little donkey who doesn't buck his load. Lord, I'm just a little donkey, here you have me. Don't think, my children, that this is nonsense; it isn't. I'm showing you the way I pray myself, and it works well.

And I offer my back to the Mother of God, who carries her Son in her arms, and off we go to Egypt. Later I will once again offer him my back for him to sit on: *Perfectus Deus, perfectus Homo!*[6] And I will become the throne of God.

What peace these considerations give me! What peace should come upon us when we realize that our Lord always forgives us, that he loves us so much, that he understands human

weakness so well, that he knows that we are made of such worthless clay. But he also knows that we have received the breath of life, which is something divine. In addition to and above this gift, which belongs to the order of nature, the Lord has infused us with grace, which allows us to share his own life. And he gives us the sacraments, the aqueducts of this divine grace; in the first place baptism, by which we come to form part of the family of God.

Confidence in God

My children, we are close to Christ. We are bearers of Christ, we are his 'little donkeys', like that donkey in Jerusalem; and as long as we don't drive him out, the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is with us. We are Christ's bearers and we have to be light and warmth, we have to be salt, we have to be spiritual fire, we have to be constant

in the apostolate, we have to be alive and dynamic, we have to be the impetuous wind of Pentecost.

The moment has come for a very personal dialogue. And today, once the Child Jesus has received the homage of the Magi, take him in your arms, my child, and squeeze him to your breast from which so many offences have come. I want to tell him aloud, sincerely: Don't ever leave me, don't let me cast you from my heart. Because that is what we do when we sin: cast him out of our soul.

My children, just see if you can find on earth a more faithful love than God's love for us. He gazes at us through the lattice of the window – the image comes from Scripture^[7]. He looks on us with the love of a mother waiting for her son to arrive: there he is, that's him... He watches for us with the love of a chaste and

faithful wife awaiting her husband. He is the one who waits for us, and so often we have been the ones who kept him waiting.

We began our prayer by asking for forgiveness. My children: isn't this the right moment to tell him: Lord, enough!

Lord, you are the Love of my loves. Lord, you are my God and my all. Lord, I know that with you there is no defeat. Lord, I want to let myself be divinized, even though humanly it is unreasonable and others may not understand. Take possession of my soul once more; forge me with your grace.

Mother, my Lady, St Joseph my Father and Lord, help me never to abandon the love of your Son.

Throughout the day you can often hold conversation with the trinity on earth, which is the way to reach the

Trinity of heaven. Bear in mind that the Mother leads us to the Son, and the Son, through the Holy Spirit, leads us to the Father, according to those words of his: *he who has seen me has seen the Father*[8] Address each person of the Blessed Trinity in turn, and repeat without fear: I believe in God the Father, I believe in God the Son, I believe in God the Holy Spirit. I hope in God the Father, I hope in God the Son, I hope in God the Holy Spirit. I love God the Father, I love God the Son, I love God the Holy Spirit. I believe in, I hope in and I love my holy Mother Mary, who is the Mother of God.

[1] A meditation given in the Pentecost oratory on 6 January 1970, feast of the Epiphany. Published in *In Dialogue with the Lord*, Scepter (U.K.), 2018, pp. 113-119.

[2] Gospel (Mt 2:2)

[3] Alleluia (Mt 2:2)

[4] Prov 8:31

[5] Mt 2:12

[6] Athanasian Creed: Perfect God,
perfect Man.

[7] Cf Cant 2:9

[8] Jn 14:9.

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(01/28/2026)