

Meditations: Monday of the Seventh Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist
our prayer during the 7th week
of Ordinary Time.

- Praying with the trust that God knows what is best
- God's generosity is greater than our own desires
- Prayer of the children of God

“TEACHER, I brought my son to you,
for he has a dumb spirit . . . I asked
your disciples to cast it out, but they

were not able to" (Mk 9:17-18).

Anguish had driven this good father to Jesus' feet, after his disciples were unable to cope with this situation.

"Our Lord wants us to ask a lot. He shows us so many examples of stubbornness in the Holy Gospel! People who wrest miracles from Him by dint of asking; sometimes placing themselves before Him and crying out to Him through their miseries."^[1]

Faced with the disciples' helplessness, the father's faith is in danger of wavering. But he opens his heart to Christ and entrusts his need to Him with simplicity: "If you can do anything, have pity on us and help us" (Mk 9:22). And Jesus exclaims: "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Jesus wants to work the miracles that people long for. Moreover, He even wants to exceed their expectations, but He needs them to open the door to Him through their faith. In every kind of

difficulty, "we can do a lot: pray, pray, and pray! And then, as far as possible, we can do what is within our power. But above all, we need to rely on divine Providence, which is another way of doing and letting things be done."^[2] —

Prayer is not a formula for obtaining what we want; rather, it is a way to prepare ourselves to receive the gifts God wants to send us. Moreover, divine plans also rely on our intercessory prayer to be carried out, just as they rely on our actions. That father in the Gospel humbly asks Jesus for help, while acknowledging that our Lord knows what is best.

PRAYER is the path to understand that God is the true protagonist in our mission. "It may seem strange," St. Augustine wrote, "that He who

knows our needs before we express them should exhort us to pray. Our God and Lord does not intend that we reveal our desires to Him, for He certainly cannot be unaware of them; rather, He intends that, through prayer, our capacity to desire may increase, so that we may become more capable of receiving the gifts He has prepared for us. Indeed, his gifts are very great, and our capacity to receive them is small.”^[3] —

“I am speaking to each one of you,” Saint Josemaría said in 1966, “to remind you that you must pray, and pray a lot! Pray throughout the day and throughout the night. If you usually sleep soundly, offer that sleep; and if you ever wake up, immediately raise your heart to God.”^[4] — Knowing that God is watching over us and loves us in everything we do, even while sleeping, can transform our whole

life into an offering that yields much fruit. How much good God will draw then from our eagerness to serve Him!

That is why it is so beneficial for us to repeat this good father's plea to Jesus: "I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief!" (Mk 9:24). If our petition only sought to obtain from God confirmation of our own desires or aspirations, we would be limiting his generosity, which is always greater than we can imagine. "Put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing" (Mal 3:10).

"LORD, YOU have placed me here, You have entrusted me with this thing or that. Resolve everything that needs to be resolved, because it is

yours and because I by myself have no strength. I know that you are my Father, and I have always seen that little children rest secure in their parents. They have no worries; they don't even know they have problems, because their parents resolve everything for them. My sons, we always have to live and pray with this firm confidence, because it is the only weapon we have and the only reason for our hope.”^[5]

Saint Josemaría wanted those who come close to the warmth of Opus Dei to learn to pray like children, to address God with the realization that they receive everything from on high. Generosity springs forth more easily when it encounters a grateful heart. In contrast, if we ask as though demanding a right, based on our own supposed merits or requests, we will have very little to stand on. God wants us to ask as children who rest in their divine filiation.

“Mary was praying when the Archangel Gabriel came to bring his message to her in Nazareth. Her small yet immense ‘Here I am,’ which made all of creation leap for joy in that moment, had been preceded throughout salvation history by many other ‘Here I am,’ by many trusting obediences, by many who were open to God’s will. There is no better way to pray than to place oneself like Mary in an attitude of openness, with a heart open to God: ‘Lord, what you want, when you want, and how you want.’ That is, a heart open to God’s will. And God always responds.”^[6] “Mary, teacher of prayer. See how she asks her Son, at Cana. And how she insists, confidently, with perseverance. And how she succeeds. Learn from her.”^[7]

^[1] Saint Josemaría, quoted in Julián Herranz, *En las afueras de Jericho*, Rialp, Madrid 2007, p. 172.

[2] Ibid., pp. 177-178.

[3] Saint Augustine, *Letter to Proba*, no. 17.

[4] Saint Josemaría, quoted in Javier Echevarría, *Memoria del Beato Josemaría Escrivá*, Rialp, Madrid 2000, p. 192.

[5] Ibid. pp. 199-200.

[6] Francis, Audience, 18 November 2020.

[7] Saint Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 502.