

Meditations: Saturday of the Fourth Week of Easter

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

- Discovering God the Father in Jesus
- Renewing our sense of divine filiation
- Praying as children

THROUGHOUT OUR LORD'S public life, the apostles discovered ever more clearly Jesus' very special

relationship with God the Father. He spoke about his Father with striking familiarity, so much so that the leaders of Israel were shocked. He encouraged the people to trust in his fatherly care, even more tender than that shown to the flowers of the field and the birds of the air. And they had seen Jesus act energetically to defend the sanctity of the Temple, because it is his Father's house. At the Last Supper, Jesus again speaks about the Father to his apostles. And Philip finally dares to make a request that perhaps was in the hearts of the others: *Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us (Jn 14:8).*

The apostles had learned from Jesus that God has a fatherly face. Israel's prayer gained even greater force: *May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us (Ps 67:1).* Thus Philip realized that to have life in full it is enough to see the face of the Father – to discover that

look of affection affirming us and filling us with security. Everything else is a consequence of that encounter. The apostles would have been surprised by Jesus' answer: *Whoever has seen me has seen the Father* (Jn 14:9). Nevertheless, this response actually explains all of Christ's behavior: his tenderness towards the weak, his strength shown in difficult moments, his patience in correcting and guiding his disciples. All his deeds and words were a manifestation of the Father's love. The Catechism of the Church tells us that "Christ's whole earthly life is Revelation of the Father."^[1]

The contemplation of this mystery leads us to make Philip's conviction our own. For our life to be full, it is enough that we discover the face of the Father, that is, it is enough that we realize always and at all times that we are God's children. We can ask Jesus in our prayer: Show us the

Father! Help me discover his presence in my life! Let me be aware that his face is constantly looking at me with infinite affection!

CHRIST'S RELATIONSHIP with his heavenly Father is not only in his heart, but overflows to others: *The Father who dwells in me is doing his works* (Jn 14:10). Jesus carried out his mission in perfect union with the one who had sent him into the world. His works are, at the same time, works of the Father. And this union, in a certain way, also extends to those who follow Christ closely: *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father* (Jn 14:12).

The deeds of a Christian are the deeds of a child of God. When done with the awareness of this relationship, they become an expression of God's marvelous unconditional love. God manifests the power of his fatherly love in our ordinary life. Therefore we will find it very helpful to renew the awareness of our divine filiation in order to confront each day with enthusiasm and courage. Saint Josemaría advised: "Call him 'Father' many times a day, and tell him – alone, in your heart – that you love him, that you adore him, that you feel proud and strong because you are his son."^[2] This simple and fundamental truth – that we are children of God – brings light to all our daily endeavors. "It leads us to pray with the trust of God's children, to pass through life with the poise of God's children, to reason and decide with the freedom of God's children, to face pain and suffering with the

serenity of God's children, to appreciate beautiful things as a child of God does.”^[3] The value of what we do is not measured by success, by results, or by the image we give to others; rather it lies within us, in our dignity of being God's beloved children.

We also discover that we share with the people around us this dignity of being beloved children of God. This changes how we look at others. “We have to behave as God's children towards all God's sons and daughters.”^[4] We realize that their deeds also have a very high value, because they bear the imprint of someone who has a special relationship with the Father. Our esteem for those around us increases. We have a greater appreciation for the contribution of our co-workers and for any service that others do for us.

THE GOSPEL of today's Mass ends with an encouraging promise:

Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son (Jn 14:13). Jesus tells the apostles – and He tells us – that prayer has great power. But we have to know how to ask in his name, that is, to ask while identifying ourselves with the sentiments of the Son. Our Lord wants our prayer to always be imbued with the warmth of a son or daughter speaking with their father. When Jesus taught his disciples how to address God, he began by saying “Our Father.” We begin this marvelous prayer by awakening in our heart the awareness that we are God’s children. And only afterwards do we dare to ask for so many things: that God be glorified, that his will be done, that we have our daily bread, that we never stray from Him. But

always with this premise: we are children turning to their Father. “You have a good Father,” Saint Teresa of Avila said, “given you by the good Jesus: let no other father be known or referred to here.”^[5]

Praying in Jesus’ name implies that we learn, little by little, to ask for what a good son or daughter asks for. Our filial prayer, in some sense, exceeds our expectations. Hence Saint Paul says that *the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words* (Rom 8:26). Saint Teresa said, when commenting on the Our Father: “However much your thoughts may wander, between such a Son and such a Father there must needs be the Holy Spirit. May He enkindle your will and bind you to Himself with the most fervent love.”^[6] When asking our Father God for something,

it is good to tell Him that, deep down, we want above all what the Holy Spirit knows is best for us and what perhaps we ourselves cannot even intuit. We can be certain that what He gives us will always be better than what we expected. And that is enough for us. So we say once again with the Apostle Philip: *Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us* (Jn 14:8).

^[1] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 516.

^[2] Saint Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 150.

^[3] Fernando Ocáriz, Pastoral Letter, 28 October 2020, no. 3.

^[4] Saint Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 36.

^[5] Saint Teresa, *The Way of Perfection*, ch. 27, no. 6.

^[6] *Ibid.*, no. 7.

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