

Meditations: Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter

Some reflections that can assist our prayer as we draw near to the solemnity of the Ascension.

- The Holy Spirit and the gift of knowledge
- Seeing God in creation
- Restoring all things in Christ

DURING THE DISCOURSE at the Last Supper, the apostles were unable to grasp fully the meaning of our Lord's words. We see them sharing with one another their perplexities: "*What is*

this that he says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father’?” They said, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We do not know what he means” (Jn 16:16-18).

But Jesus continues his discourse:
Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy (Jn 16:20).

The disciples didn't understand what was about to happen, during the days of Jesus' death and resurrection, since they hadn't yet received the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity, who would be sent by the Father and the Son after the Ascension. It is the Paraclete who will have the mission to “teach,” “to remind them” and “bear witness” to everything Jesus had said and done (cf. *Jn 14:26; 15:26*), illuminating their intellects,

moving their wills and enkindling their hearts.

To understand the words of God contained in Revelation, we need the assistance of the Holy Spirit. His gift enables us to interpret correctly the events and situations that we experience in our life, reading them in the light of being a son or daughter chosen for a specific mission. This gift of the Paraclete is known as the gift of knowledge, since it enables us to discover the presence and majesty of the Creator in everything that happens to us and in every created reality.

THE SACRED WRITER concludes the account of creation each day with the words: *And God saw that it was good* (Gen 1:9). The Creator himself seems to marvel at what has come forth

from his hands, and invites us to contemplate the beauty of the created world and protect it. Creation is a precious gift from God, a letter He has written to us, and with the Paraclete's light we learn to read in it his infinite love for us. When He finished making man, a special nuance is added: *And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good (Gen 1:31)*. Scripture stresses how special mankind is for God; the beauty of man and woman stands out from the rest of the created world. Thanks to the gift of knowledge we see everything around us – especially other men and women – as God's handiwork. We learn “to find in creation the signs, the footprints of God, to understand that God speaks in every epoch and speaks to me.”^[1] —

Thus we discover “the theological meaning of creation.”^[2] — With the gift of knowledge, the Holy Spirit moves

us to a spontaneous prayer of praise, expressed in thanksgiving and hymns, in blessings and psalms. Praise is a prayer that recognizes God's greatness and extols Him. *Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised* (Ps 48:1), the psalmist exclaims. "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit," we pray each day. The Gloria and the Sanctus that we pray at Mass are a clear expression of this desire to render homage to our Creator.

The prayer of praise is especially present in the book of Psalms, which collects the hymns and acclamations that the people of Israel used in their worship of God. The psalmist, in contemplating creation, is a model for Christian prayer, praying and singing his love for the Creator: *O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth!* (Ps 8:1). *The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his*

handiwork (Ps 19:1). Praise the Lord from the heavens . . . Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! (Ps 148:1-3). Through the Paraclete's gifts we experience more deeply the world's beauty and luminosity. We learn to see everything with clean eyes, and to want everything as God wants it. We discover God's footprints in each created being, and thus we realize how closely we are accompanied by Him.

AT THE SAME TIME that we discover the greatness of creation, the gift of knowledge "makes us aware of the true value of creatures in their relationship with the Creator."^[3] —
Thus the Holy Spirit helps us to distinguish between created beings and God, by discovering the infinite distance that separates them. We do

not fall into the temptation of turning created beings into idols that distance us from God. “We love the world because God made it good, because it came forth perfect from his hands, and because – although men sometimes make it ugly and evil, through sin – we have the duty to consecrate it, to bring it back, to return it to God: to restore in Christ all things in heaven and on earth (cf. *Eph 1:10*).”^[4] —

The solemnity of the Ascension is drawing near. Our Lord has redeemed us and has ascended to the right hand of the Father. He wants us to unite ourselves to Him through a holy life, which sanctifies everything it touches. Therefore, before departing, Jesus beseeched God the Father: *I do not ask that you take them out of the world (Jn 17:15)*. He wants us to remain in our environment, in our work, in the midst of the society in which we live.

“In the world, without being worldly,” Saint Josemaría said, in order to sanctify it, to transform it, to put at God’s feet everything we have in our hands, “placing Christ at the summit of all human activities.”^[5] —

With the gift of knowledge, we have within our reach the possibility of “enlivening daily work with the Gospel, and thus giving meaning to work, also work that is difficult.”^[6] —

The gift of knowledge assists us in our effort to bring everything into harmony with God. Looking to Mary, Mother of the Creator, we can learn to love the world better and to praise the divine hands that have shaped everything around us.

^[1] — Benedict XVI, Audience, 2 June 2012.

^[2] — Saint John Paul II, Audience, 23 April 1989.

^[3] — Ibid.

^[4] Saint Josemaría, *Letters* 23, no. 6.

^[5] Saint Josemaría, *Conversations*, no. 59.

^[6] Benedict XVI, Audience, 2 June 2012.

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