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Meditations: Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during these days of Lent.

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- God has great dreams for us
- Abandoning ourselves as children
- Faith is making room for God

YESTERDAY WE celebrated *Laetare Sunday*, as a reminder that Lent is a time of penance to prepare for the great joy of Easter. In the book of the prophet Isaiah we hear God tell us: *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in my people* (Is 65:17-19). God invites us to be joyful and He himself rejoices. In the book of Genesis we also see God's joy when, contemplating the world his hands have just shaped, He affirms that it is "very good" (cf. *Gen 1:31*). The Creator, who prepared the world for mankind, was already dreaming of the life of his children.

We know, however, that sin entered the world and destroyed the initial harmony. But God never tired of

forgiving or of dreaming about sharing his love with mankind. Each of us is, in some way, a “dream” of God, his desire for our good and happiness. “God thinks of each one of us – and He thinks of our good! He loves us and dreams of the joy He will share with us. Therefore God wants to ‘recreate’ us, to make our hearts new, so that joy may triumph. And He makes so many plans . . . all the dreams that a person in love can have.”^[1] Saint Josemaría wrote: “how moved I am whenever I read the words of the prophet Isaiah: *Ego vocavi te nomine tuo, meus es tu!* – I have called you, I have brought you into my Church, you are mine! God himself telling me I am his! It is enough to make one go mad with Love!”^[2]

I WILL PRAISE YOU, Lord, because you rescued me (Ps 30:1). This psalm expresses the gratitude of someone who was rescued by God from the clutches of death. In this experience, the psalmist has learned at least two important things. The first is that God's anger lasts only an instant, but his goodness lasts a lifetime. The Lord does not want to destroy, but to correct so that his children can be happy. Therefore, even after offending Him by sin, we can always return to Him with the assurance that we will be welcomed. Although it may sometimes seem that He has left us alone or has hidden himself, in reality God will always be faithful. *For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer (Is 54:7-8).*

The second teaching of this psalm is that sickness and death reveal to us our own frailty. In times of prosperity it is easy to forget this and not realize the need we have for others and, above all, for God. But when a time of personal or family crisis arrives, our neediness is revealed to us. We realize, with new depth, the importance of communion – with God and those around us – and of prayer in our life. “You said to me: ‘Father, I am having a very rough time.’ In answer I whispered in your ear: Take upon your shoulders a small part of that cross, just a tiny part. And if you can’t manage that then... leave it entirely on the strong shoulders of Christ. And from this moment on, repeat with me: ‘My Lord and my God: into your hands I abandon the past and the present and the future, what is small and what is great, what amounts to a little and what amounts to a lot, things temporal and things

eternal.' Then, don't worry any more."^[3]

ON ONE OCCASION, a powerful man, a high-ranking royal official, asked Jesus to go with him to Capernaum to heal his seriously ill son. His faith and hope are still weak, but with his love as a father he is eager to try anything to help his son. Hence he has traveled more than 20 miles from Capernaum to Cana, to look for this Teacher who people have told him works miracles never seen before.

Our Lord doesn't respond to his request right away, but rather serenely laments the disbelief He had encountered in Galilee: everyone wanted to see signs and wonders, but they were not very willing to accept his word or convert. That man keeps

insisting and, above all, little by little begins to truly believe, as his docile obedience to Jesus' response shows: *Go: your son will live (Jn 4:50)*. As he hurries back to Capernaum, his servants meet him with the news that his child is well. *And he himself believed, and all his household (Jn 4:53)*, the evangelist concludes.

Our Lord wants to heal us, like the son of that royal official, freeing us from our slavery to sin and forgiving us. But He asks us that we too, like that official, believe in Him. "Faith is to make room for the love of God, to make room for the power of God, but not the power of someone who is very powerful, but the power of someone who loves me, who is in love with me, and wants to experience joy with me. That is faith. This is believing: to make room for our Lord so that He can come and change me."^[4] We can ask our Mother to help us have, like her, a

great faith, both obedient and humble, so that our Lord can fill us with his grace.

[1] Francis, Homily, 16 March 2015.

[2] Saint Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 12.

[3] Saint Josemaría, *The Way of the Cross*, Seventh Station, no. 3.

[4] Francis, Homily, 16 March 2015.

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