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Meditations: Tuesday of the Twelfth Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the eleventh week of Ordinary Time. The topics are: healthy fear of the Lord; the Kingdom of God on earth; magnanimously walking with others.

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- Healthy fear of the Lord
- The Kingdom of God on earth

- Magnanimously walking with others

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THE FIRST psalm of the Psalter begins by praising the man who is aware of his condition as a creature and who recognizes the greatness of his God: blessed is the man *whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night* (Ps 1:2). We are invited to consider the attitude adopted by people who understand the true meaning of the “fear of the Lord,” a gift of the Holy Spirit that has nothing whatsoever to do with being afraid, but which leads us to recognize our Creator’s wisdom and greatness. The psalmist’s song praises people whose hearts are anchored on what they truly desire, whose impulses are directed toward what they really love, and who are

not interested in anything that could separate them from the Lord. We want that attitude for ourselves: a firm disposition to live in contemplation of God's greatness and love for humanity.

Scripture shows us the reaction of Hezekiah, king of Judah, to a threatening letter from the king of Assyria: *He went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: 'Lord, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, Lord, and hear; open your eyes, Lord, and see'* (2 Kings 19:14-16). Hezekiah's confidence in addressing God is striking. He was probably accustomed to praising and giving thanks to God, which helped him to turn to God even more in his time of need. The narrative continues by

describing how that same night the angel of the Lord struck down one hundred eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp.

God is always waiting for us. He waits for us to share our needs with Him, especially the manifestation of our love – not because He needs it, but because this attitude will allow a holy “fear of the Lord” to develop within us.

GOD HAS founded his city forever, says the psalmist. *Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, His holy mountain, beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth (Ps 48:1-2).* These verses speak to us of a city that Christians try to establish on earth, a city built on God’s love for humanity. St. Augustine wrote a treatise at the end

of his life delving into this theme, as did St. Thomas More. Both examples help us recognize how crucial the saints considered meditation on the nature of the kingdom of God on earth and on the way we should relate to one another to make that kingdom a reality.

St. Josemaría says in this regard: “Truth and justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. That is the kingdom of Christ: the divine activity which saves men and which will reach its culmination when history ends and the Lord comes from the heights of paradise finally to judge men.”^[1] The reign of Christ on earth refers above all to the way He is present in human hearts. If Christ is at the center of our soul, our actions among our brothers and sisters will be in accordance with God’s view of people and the way He wants to reign in the world.

Christian life is always in communion; the path is not walked individually. The Church established by Christ is his own mystical body, of which all Christians are part. Its activity, and therefore its reign, extends to everywhere its members are found. “Unlike human society which tends to follow its own interests regardless or even to the detriment of others, the community of believers rejects individualism in favour of sharing and solidarity. There is no room for egoism in a Christian’s soul.”^[2] This union and solidarity among all God’s children is one of the signs of his reign.

IN TODAY’S Gospel, Jesus describes what happens when God’s greatness comes into contact with people who are not well-disposed to receive it: *Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not*

throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces (Mt 7:6). This does not mean that there are people not destined to enter the kingdom of God. On the contrary, everyone is called to enter into happiness with God, and we must consider the best way to share that invitation with each person. Therefore Jesus goes on to say, *So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you (Mt 7:12).* We are to seek the most suitable path for each person, finding ways to adapt ourselves to others' situations.

To better prepare for this sweet joy of evangelising, St. Josemaría suggests praying for everyone: “But let's not think only of ourselves. Expand your heart until it takes in all mankind. Above all, think of those near you — relatives, friends, colleagues — and see how you can get them to appreciate a deeper

friendship with our Lord. (...) And ask also for all those souls you don't know, because we have embarked together on a single voyage.”^[3] —

How narrow is the gate and how constricted the road that leads to life! (Mt 7:14), Jesus says. Indeed, the path will be narrow if we want to enter into Life with many people around us, accompanying us. “Magnanimity means greatness of spirit, a largeness of heart wherein many can find refuge,” St. Josemaria taught. “Magnanimity gives us the energy to break out of ourselves and be prepared to undertake generous tasks which will be of benefit to all.”^[4] — The first person to deeply understand the kingdom of God and accept the invitation to live in it was our Lady. We can ask her to make us magnanimous so we can bring it, one by one, to many people around us.

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[1] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 180.

[2] Pope Francis, Audience, 26-VI-2019.

[3] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 175.

[4] St. Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 80.

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