

Meditations: Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Easter

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

- Jesus reveals to us God's fatherhood
- Christ is Savior and Judge
- Eagerness to follow the divine will

THE GOSPEL of today's Mass presents us with words of Jesus spoken shortly before his Passion. *Jesus cried*

out and said, “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” (Jn 12:44-46). In these final moments of his public life, Christ manifests the infinite love with which He came into the world to bring us light, to show us the love of the Father, and thus sow joy and peace in souls.

In this passage we see how “Jesus lives and acts with constant reference to the Father. He frequently addresses him with a word imbued with filial love: *Abba*. Also during his prayer in Gethsemane this same word comes to his lips. When the disciples ask him to teach them how to pray, he teaches them the ‘Our Father.’ After the resurrection, at the moment of departing from this world, he seems

to refer once more to this prayer, when he says: 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' Thus, through the Son, God has revealed himself in the fullness of the mystery of his fatherhood."^[1]

A key part of Christ's mission was to show us clearly "the one who sent him," and, by his death and resurrection, to make us children of God. Saint Josemaria saw this reality as the foundation for building a strong interior life. He often reminded us that "God is a Father who is full of tenderness, of infinite love. 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. All this implies a genuine program of interior life, which needs to be channeled through your relationship of piety with God, through these acts

(which should be few, I insist, but constant) which will enable you to develop the attitudes and manner of a good son.”^[2] —

JESUS CONTINUES his discourse saying: *If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world (Jn 12:47).* Jesus is a savior, but one much greater than our idea of an earthly savior. Jesus is also a judge, but his justice is not dispensed as we men do. To avoid an overly human way of thinking about Jesus, we should keep in mind that “Christ is and clearly presents himself above all as savior. He does not consider it his mission to judge men according to only human principles. He is, above all, the one who teaches the path of salvation and not the accuser of the guilty.

Therefore we can say that, facing this light of God revealed in Christ, facing such a truth, in a certain sense one's very deeds judge each one.”^[3]

Our Lord's preaching was marked by meekness. The Gospel sees in this attitude the fulfillment of the prophecies: *He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice* (Is 42:2-3; cf. Mt 12:19-20). Our Lord announces the truth clearly, but He rejects any attitude that leads to humiliating or crushing those who refuse to accept his preaching. He wants to win the hearts of each person: “Jesus does not want to convince by force,” Saint Josemaría said. “While being close to people, right among them, He gently moves them to follow Him, in search of true peace and authentic joy.”^[4]

It is good to remember the unbounded patience of God, who takes into account the limitations of his children. Each soul has its own time and pace. There are countless stories of people who, thanks to the understanding and support of a good friend, end up discovering the joy of opening their hearts to Christ. “The truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it makes its entrance into souls at once gently and powerfully.”^[5] This conviction, drawn from Christ’s life and the Church’s own experience, has been called the “golden rule”^[6] of evangelization.

OUR LORD’S PREACHING was nourished by his deep desire to fulfill the will of the Father: *I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given*

me a commandment – what to say and what to speak (Jn 12:49). Jesus lived facing the Father. It was there that He drew the strength to bring light to the people around Him. Our Lord's activity cannot be understood as simply philanthropy; rather his actions arise from the wellspring of his love for God the Father. We want to discover and unite ourselves to the divine will because that is what gives life: when we talk with other people, when we help bring forward formational activities or in the midst of our daily jobs.

Carrying out our jobs facing God will also help us to see from his perspective the apparent failures in our life and the times when fruit seems scarce. Any sincere effort to do good is fruitful, even if we do not see external results. “This fruitfulness is often invisible, elusive and unquantifiable. We can know quite well that our lives will be

fruitful, without claiming to know how, or where, or when.”^[7] And when discouragement tries to enter our lives, we should turn our eyes again to our Father God: “Let us learn to rest in the tenderness of the arms of the Father amid our creative and generous commitment. Let us keep marching forward; let us give him everything, allowing him to make our efforts bear fruit in his good time.”^[8] When we see clearly that the mission surpasses our own strength, perhaps God is teaching us that He is the one who makes all things new, while we provide our tiny contribution. Realizing this clearly is the best way to ground our life on rock.

In this longing to truly be in harmony with the desires in the heart of God the Father, as Christ was, we may find it helpful to savor anew the words of the Our Father. “By praying ‘thy will be done,’ we are

not called to subserviently bow our head as if we were slaves. No! God wants us to be free; his love frees us. Indeed, the ‘Our Father’ is the prayer of children, not of slaves; but of children who know their father’s heart and are certain of his loving plan.”^[9] We can also find it helpful to relish those words of our Mother, “be it done unto me according to your word,” that express her desire to always follow God’s lead closely.

^[1] Saint John Paul II, General Audience, 23 October 1985.

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

^[3] Saint John Paul II, General Audience, 30 September 1987.

^[4] Saint Josemaría, *Letters* 4, no. 2 c.

^[5] Second Vatican Council, *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 1.

^[6] Cf. John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, no. 35.

^[7] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 279.

^[8] *Ibid.*

^[9] Francis, General Audience, 20 March 2019.

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