

Meditations: Monday of the Twenty-Sixth Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the 26th week of Ordinary Time.

- The trap of pride
- Admiring others' gifts
- Knowing oneself

“WHOEVER welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and

whoever welcomes me welcomes him who sent me.” And Jesus continued: “The least among you is the greatest” (*Lk 9:48*). These words probably caused surprise among his disciples, who were eagerly discussing who would be the most important in our Lord’s kingdom. Apparently, this was not an isolated conversation about this topic, but had been going on for some time behind Jesus’ back. Hence the evangelist, before telling us our Lord’s response, says that Jesus knew “the thoughts of their hearts” (*Lk 9:47*). In the midst of this conversation among adults seeking personal glory, the sudden appearance of a child enables them to grasp clearly what the Master truly expected of each of them.

This scene with an unassuming child graphically demonstrates the power of humility. When we are sincerely convinced of our littleness, we find

God in the most ordinary things. In contrast, if we let ourselves get entangled in thoughts tainted by pride, we end up giving ourselves excessive importance and shutting ourselves up in labyrinths with no way out. This passage from Sacred Scripture shows us how even those who, later on, will become the pillars of the Church can fall into this trap.

“Without humility we will never find God: we will only find ourselves. Because a person without humility has no horizon in front of them. They only have a mirror: they look at themselves. Let us ask the Lord to break this mirror so that we can look beyond, to the horizon, where He is.”^[1]

RIGHT AFTER Jesus spoke to his disciples about the importance of

becoming like children, John says with simplicity: “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow us” (*Lk 9:49*). The apostles seemed to view their own vocation as a privilege that placed them above the rest and separated them from others. Once again, we see the temptation of pride, which urges us to emphasize our own talents, seeing them as something we deserve, instead of giving thanks for all the gifts that we and other people have received. This path often quickly leads to envy and blurs our view of others.

Jesus’ answer changes their coordinates and raises their sight to that of God: “Do not forbid him; for he that is not against you is for you” (*Lk 9:50*). Our Lord wants everyone to contribute with their own talents in spreading the Gospel. Instead of a defensive attitude, Christ

always wants to open Himself to more people, so that we men and women may share in his gifts. “A key point in which God and man differ is pride: in God there is no pride, because he is total plenitude and total willingness to love and give life. But in us men, pride is deeply rooted and requires constant vigilance and purification.”^[2]

True humility helps us open ourselves to those around us, to place ourselves at their service and rejoice in their happiness. Humility leads us to consider any gift from God – especially a vocation in the Church, such as the call to Opus Dei – as a gift destined to enrich everyone. “Giving oneself sincerely to others is so effective that God rewards it with a humility filled with joy,”^[3] Saint Josemaría assured us. Therefore, if sadness ever tries to enter or we realize that, like the apostles, we have lost sight of Jesus, a simple step

to regain hope can be to ask ourselves: Who can I serve? Who needs my help today and the gifts God has given me?

THE VIRTUE of humility leads us to a healthy and realistic knowledge of ourselves, to accepting ourselves with our strengths and weaknesses. Being humble means being aware of our position between heaven and earth, of the reality of sin and grace, of the weight of the past and the hope of the future. Therefore, as Saint Josemaría taught, humility enables us to discover the positive and negative aspects in our lives, filling us with gratitude and the desire to improve: “The experience of your weakness, the failures that always arise in every human effort, will give you greater realism, more humility, and more understanding of

others. Successes and joys will invite you to give thanks, and to realize that you do not live for yourself, but for the service of others and of God.”^[4]

Like that child who, in its simplicity, captures Christ’s attention, every time we sincerely seek our Lord, we feel the joy of being welcomed just as we are. We realize that the confidence of knowing we are loved by Jesus is the best foundation for changing our lives: “Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart” (*Mt 11:29*).

The Magnificat marvelously expresses the joy that humility gives us: “My soul magnifies the Lord,” Mary says, “and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked upon the lowliness of his handmaid. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me” (*Lk 1:45-49*). We can ask our

Mother to grant us this humility so that God can accomplish his great works in our lives too.

^[1] Francis, Audience, 22 December 2021.

^[2] Benedict XVI, Angelus, 23 September 2012.

^[3] St. Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 591.

^[4] St. Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 49.