

Meditations: Wednesday of the Third Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the third week of ordinary time. The topics are: a seed that touches the heart; seeking profound happiness; growing among thorns.

- A seed that touches the heart
 - Seeking profound happiness
 - Growing among thorns
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THE CROWD following Jesus is so vast that He has to find a creative way to ensure that everyone can hear his words. He decides to climb into a boat and speak to the multitude from there. Among the many parables He shares, He focuses particularly on the conditions necessary for seeds to bear fruit. Through this image, the Lord invites us to reflect on our disposition to receive his message, appealing to our honesty with ourselves.

Some are like the seed along the path where the word is sown; as soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them (Mk 4:15). Christ's teaching is addressed to the whole person: it does not only touch upon a few aspects of life, but calls on our entire being. It demands our full adherence, for it seeks our happiness both on earth and in heaven. Today, amid the countless pieces of

information and stimuli we receive, we may behave like curious passersby. We listen to various things without taking time to ponder or discern what we allow to enter our hearts. As a result, it may be difficult to distinguish what is truly relevant to our lives from what holds merely superficial interest.

The seed of the Word “is already present in our heart, but making it fruitful depends on us; it depends on the embrace that we reserve for this seed. Often one is distracted by too many interests, by too many enticements, and it is difficult to distinguish, among the many voices and many words, that of the Lord, the only one that makes us free.”^[1]
Jesus invites us to let his Word touch both our minds and hearts. This is how it can take root and grow, making it harder for the devil to snatch it away. “Faith does not simply provide information about

who Christ is; rather, it entails a personal relationship with Christ, a surrender of our whole person, with all our understanding, will and feelings, to God's self-revelation."^[2] —

OTHERS, LIKE seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away (Mk 4:16–17). Joy is a sign that what we hear is resonating in our hearts. Every piece of good news brings some measure of gladness. However, Jesus invites us to reflect on the depth of our happiness. In this life, everything worthwhile requires effort, and the deepest priorities of our hearts are often revealed in sacrifice.

This does not mean that Christian life consists of accumulating suffering on earth to enjoy heaven later.

“Happiness in heaven,” wrote Saint Josemaría, “is for those who know how to be happy on earth.”^[3] Christ's call encourages us to seek ideals that give direction and fulfillment to our lives, and to express those aspirations in our actions. He knows that some joys are easier to obtain but shallower, while others demand greater inner effort because they are more profound. Smiling in spite of a bad mood is more “costly” than enjoying a good meal, but it can bring more lasting happiness, because the good we seek (a life of peace and joy) is greater.

Ultimately, as the founder of Opus Dei said, true happiness does not depend so much on intense experiences or immediate pleasures but on an inner attitude of always feeling accompanied by God: “You

are enjoying a few days of great happiness, and your soul is filled with light and colour. And, curiously, the reasons for your joy are the same ones that at other times disheartened you! It is always the same: it all depends on the point of view.

Laetetur cor quaerentium Dominum!

— when you seek the Lord, your heart always overflows with happiness.”^[4] —

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STILL OTHERS, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word, but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful (Mk 4:18–19). Sometimes, the seed of the divine Word may lose ground in our hearts because of the daily concerns that preoccupy us. Jesus does not expect us to abandon those concerns; our families and

work will naturally occupy much of our time and attention, especially if, like many others, we want to follow God in the middle of the world.

These responsibilities form an essential part of the path to holiness. That is why God wants us to bring these realities to Him, not to separate them from our Christian lives: “A saying of a soul of prayer: in intentions, may Jesus be our aim; in affections, our Love; in conversation, our theme; in actions, our model.”^[5] Christ's message is not just another facet of our existence, but the horizon against which all other aspects of our lives find meaning and coherence. The seed can grow even among thorns, as long as we consistently seek union with the Lord. Over time, we will discover how to align our lives with his will.

The parable of the sower, told by Jesus from a boat, can serve as a

guide for examining our inner sincerity in allowing Christ to reign in our hearts. We want to be among those who, like our Mother Mary, allow God's Word to bear enduring fruit in them, spreading joy and goodness to all around them: *Still others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown (Mk 4:20).*

[1] Pope Francis, Angelus, 12-VII-2020.

[2] Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, 21-VIII-2011.

[3] St. Josemaría, *The Forge*, no. 1005.

[4] St. Josemaría, *Furrow*, no. 72.

[5] St. Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 271.

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