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Letter from the Prelate (June 2013)

The Prelate continues his reflections on the Creed during the Year of Faith, focusing on the sending of the Holy Spirit and Christ's second coming at the end of time.

06/04/2013

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

The beginning of June always brings to our mind, with special force, the memory of St. Josemaría, whose

liturgical memorial (a solemnity in the Prelature) is the 26th. By meditating on the example of his life, and rereading his writings, we come to realize ever more fully the great marvels that God carries out in souls completely faithful to his plans. There comes to my lips that exclamation from Sacred Scripture: *mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis* , [1] how marvelous is God in his saints!

Complete identification with Christ (for that is what sanctity means) is attributed in a special way to the Holy Spirit. Let us give thanks for his unceasing action in sanctifying souls. In recent days, as we celebrated the solemnities of Pentecost and then the Most Holy Trinity, we have frequently raised our heart to God, whose will (St. Paul tells us) is that all men and women may *be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth* .
[2]

And now with the return to ordinary time, the liturgy reminds us that we find ourselves in the stage of history that extends from the coming of the Paraclete at Pentecost to the glorious coming of Christ at the end of time. This is one of the truths contained in the Creed, with which the cycle of the mysteries referring to our Lord closes. Each Sunday, at Holy Mass, we profess that our Lord, seated now at the right hand of the Father, *will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end* . [3]

“Since the Ascension,” the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains, “Christ’s coming in glory has been imminent,” [4] in the sense that it could happen at any moment. Only God knows when this event, which marks the end of history and the definitive renewal of the world, will take place. Therefore, without any alarm or fear, but with a sense of

responsibility, we have to be always well prepared for this definitive encounter with Jesus, which, moreover, will take place for each of us at the moment of death. From God we have come and to God we are headed: this reality is a true synthesis of Christian wisdom. Nevertheless, as the Pope recently lamented, “these two poles of history are often forgotten; and, at times, especially faith in Christ’s return and in the Last Judgment, are not so clear and firm in Christian hearts.” [5]

Let us not forget that the definitive encounter of our Lord with each person is preceded by his constant activity in each moment of our ordinary life. I still recall how forcefully St. Josemaría would ask him, in this daily encounter, *mane nobiscum!* , [6] remain with us. Do we say this to him with the awareness that we have to let him act in all of our life? He also exhorted us to

always be ready to give an account to God of our life at any moment. In *The Way* he wrote: “‘He shall come to judge the living and the dead.’ So we pray in the Creed. God grant that you never lose sight of that judgment and of that justice and...of that Judge.” [7] I am a witness to the fact that each day he considered this future event personally and was filled with joy; all who realize we are children of God should rejoice in this reality as well. Therefore he added: “Doesn’t your soul burn with the desire to make your Father God happy when he has to judge you?” [8]

The present time, the stage of history that it falls to each of us to live through, “is a time of waiting and watching,” [9] in which we have to work with the eagerness and enthusiasm of good children who strive to build up on earth, with the help of grace, the kingdom of God that Christ will bring to its perfection

on the last day. This is what the parable of the talents teaches us, which our Father commented on so often. [10] As the Roman Pontiff reminded us in one of his catecheses for the Year of Faith, “the expectation of the Lord’s return is the time of action . . . the time in which we should bring God’s gifts to fruition, not for ourselves but for him, for the Church, for others. The time to seek to increase goodness in the world always; and in particular, in this period of crisis, today, it is important not to turn in on ourselves, burying our own talent, our spiritual, intellectual, and material riches, everything that the Lord has given us, but rather to open ourselves, to be supportive, to be attentive to others.” [11]

My daughters and sons, let us not turn a blind eye on these recommendations; let us strive to help others—many people!—not only

to hear them, but also to diligently put them into practice. In the end, everything comes down to being attentive, out of love for God, to the needs of others, beginning with those who are closest to us—those who are at our side for family, professional or social reasons. And we should do so keeping very much in mind, as St. John of the Cross wrote, and the *Catechism* repeats, that “at the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love.” [12] This is what Christ himself tells us in the moving scene of the final judgment presented by St. Matthew. [13] How well do we serve others? Do we put supernatural and human joy into those small daily points of service?

The thought of these final realities should not, I repeat, be a cause of fears that paralyze the soul, but rather an occasion to rectify our earthly path, striving to carry out what God expects of each of us. It has

to spur us to “live the present better. God offers us this time with mercy and patience so that we may learn every day to recognize him in the poor and in the lowly. Let us strive for goodness and be watchful in prayer and in love.” [14]

We are sustained and urged forward by the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus sent into the world after his glorious ascension into heaven. We have joyfully recalled this reality on the recent solemnity of Pentecost and we profess his existence and his action in the Church every time we pray the Creed: *I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets .* [15]

This is a truth inaccessible to human reason, revealed by Christ to the apostles, that shows us God’s

greatness and perfection. “The Father is not made by anyone, nor created by anyone, nor generated by anyone. The Son is not made nor created, but is generated by the Father alone. The Holy Spirit is not made nor created nor generated, but proceeds from the Father and the Son.” [16] *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* synthesizes this doctrine in a few words: “The divine Unity is Triune.” [17]

The Holy Spirit is the love of the first two Persons: uncreated and infinite Love, consubstantial Love, eternal Love who proceeds from the mutual self-giving of the Father and the Son. It is an absolutely supernatural mystery that we know by revelation from Christ himself and that helps us to understand the greatness of the gift of loving. Based on his words, the Fathers of the Church and other great theologians, guided by the Magisterium, have striven to explain

in some way—always within the obscure light of faith—the divinity of the Paraclete.

Reflecting on the way of knowing and loving proper to human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, and on the names and missions that are attributed to the Holy Spirit in Sacred Scripture, they have tried to clarify his procession from the Father and the Son as subsistent Love. Thus just as God the Father, in knowing his own Essence, engenders the Son, so the Father and the Son love one another in a unique act of eternal and infinite love, who is the Holy Spirit.

What joy and peace should be ours on knowing that at every moment we are assisted by the divine Paraclete! Not only accompanied from without, as an affectionate friend, but as a guest who dwells, with the Father and the Son, in the intimacy of our

soul in grace. The Holy Spirit *in toil is comfort sweet; pleasant coolness in the heat; solace in the midst of woe* ,
[18] as the Church prays in the sequence for Pentecost. He is the *lux beatissima*, the blessed light that penetrates to the depths of our soul. He illumines us so that we may know Christ better, strengthens us to follow him closely when obstacles and setbacks seem to besiege us, prompts us to get out of ourselves to be concerned about others and bring them to God.

“The strength and the power of God light up the face of the earth. The Holy Spirit is present in the Church of Christ for all time, so that it may be, always and in everything, a sign raised up before all nations, announcing to all men the goodness and the love of God (cf. *Is 11:12*). In spite of our great limitations, we can look up to heaven with confidence and joy: God loves us and frees us

from our sins. The presence and the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church are a foretaste of eternal happiness, of the joy and peace for which we are destined by God.” [19]

Among the metaphors that Scripture uses to speak about the Paraclete, one of the most frequent is that of water, an absolutely essential element for natural life: where it is lacking or scarce, everything becomes a desert, and living beings fall sick or die. It is one of the great riches that the Creator has entrusted to mankind in order to administer it well, in the service of everyone. In the supernatural order, this source of life is the Paraclete. In his conversation with the Samaritan woman, and later at the feast of Tabernacles, Jesus promised that he would give those who welcome his words with faith *living water* ; that out of their hearts would flow *rivers of living water* . As St. John remarks,

this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive . [20]

The Holy Spirit comes to Christians as an inexhaustible source of divine treasures. We have received him in Baptism and in Confirmation; he is conferred on us in the sacrament of Penance, applying once again to souls the infinite merits of Christ; he is sent to our souls and our bodies each time we receive the Eucharist and the other sacraments; he acts in us through the infused virtues and the gifts.... In a word, his mission consists in making us true children of God and leading us to behave in accord with this dignity. “The Holy Spirit teaches us to see with the eyes of Christ, to live life as Christ lived, to understand life as Christ understood it. That is why the living water, who is the Holy Spirit, quenches the thirst of our life.” [21]

The Paraclete, Lord and Giver of life, who spoke through the prophets and anointed Christ so that he might communicate to us God's words, continues now to make his voice heard in the Church and in the intimacy of souls. Therefore "to live according to the Holy Spirit means to live by faith and hope and charity—to allow God to take possession of our lives and to change our hearts, to make us resemble him more and more." [22] Let us thank him for the care he gives us like a good father and mother, for he is that and much more for each one of us. Do we invoke him frequently? Do we renew every day our determination to keep our soul attentive to his inspirations? Do we strive to follow them without putting up resistance?

To make these desires a reality, I recommend that you make your own some words that St. Josemaría wrote down during the first years of the

Work: “Come, O Holy Spirit!
Enlighten my understanding in order
to know your commands; strengthen
my heart against the snares of the
enemy; enkindle my will. I have
heard your voice, and I don’t want to
harden my heart and resist, saying
‘Later... tomorrow.’ *Nunc coepi!* Right
now! Lest there be no tomorrow for
me! O, Spirit of truth and wisdom,
Spirit of understanding and counsel,
Spirit of joy and peace! I want
whatever you want; I want because
you want; I want as you want; I want
whenever you want.” [23]

Let us ask trustingly for the Church
and for the Pope, for the bishops and
priests, for the entire Christian
people. In a special way, let us pray
for this small part of the Church that
is Opus Dei, for its faithful and
cooperators, for all those who draw
close to our apostolate moved by the
noble desire of serving God and
others more and better. And what

great consolation is offered us by the solemnity of the Heart of Jesus and the memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary! Let us go to these refuges of peace, of love, of joy, of security.

Two days ago I returned from a trip to South Africa, where the apostolate of the Work is starting to take shape. You know that I would like to be in all the places where my daughters and sons are living and working. I reach there with prayer, with joyful sacrifice, with the offering of work. Unite yourselves to my intentions and pray for me, especially on the occasion of my birthday, on the 14th, so that always and in everything I am moved by the exclusive desire to serve God, the Church, souls, and all of you with our Father's totality and joy, with the fidelity of our beloved Don Alvaro and those who have preceded us to our home in heaven.

With all my affection, I bless you,

Your Father

+ Javier

Rome, June 1, 2013

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Footnotes:

[1] *Ps 67/68:36 (Vulgate)*.

[2] *1 Tim 2:4*.

[3] Roman Missal, Nicene-
Constantinopolitan Creed.

[4] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,
no. 673.

[5] Pope Francis, Address at a general
audience, April 24, 2013.

[6] *Lk 24:29*.

[7] St. Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 745.

[8] *Ibid* ., no. 746.

[9] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 672.

[10] See *Mt* 25:14:30

[11] Pope Francis, Address at a general audience, April 24, 2013.

[12] St. John of the Cross, *Avisos y sentencias* , 57, in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no.1022.

[13] See *Mt* 25:31-46.

[14] Pope Francis, Address at a general audience, April 24, 2013.

[15] Roman Missal, Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

[16] The Athanasian Creed or *Quicumque*. [17] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 254.

[18] Roman Missal, solemnity of Pentecost, Sequence.

[19] St. Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 128.

[20] See *Jn* 4:10-14; 7:37-39.

[21] Pope Francis, Address at a general audience, May 8, 2013.

[22] St. Josemaría, *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 134.

[23] St. Josemaría, manuscript note, April 1934.

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