

Meditations: Tuesday of the Eighth Week of Ordinary Time

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

- Jesus calls us to be detached
- Leaving “everything” also includes interior attitudes
- God does not let himself be outdone in generosity

THE OUTCOME of the encounter with the rich young man may have left the apostles feeling disheartened, but the

event gives Jesus an opportunity to explain the meaning and value of detachment. Christ needs disciples with little baggage, ready to be moved by the Holy Spirit and to let him fill their hearts. As Mother Teresa said, "Even God cannot fill a heart that is already full."¹ The apostolic mission requires great freedom of heart.

Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come" (Mk 10:29-30). The Master's words left the apostles thoughtful. In their time together, they have seen what poverty means for the Lord. He does not even have a

place to lay his head (Mt 8:20); they are witnesses to the fact that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor (2 Cor 8:9).

“Jesus’ wealth is that of his boundless confidence in God the Father, his constant trust, his desire always and only to do the Father’s will and give glory to him. Jesus is rich in the same way as a child who feels loved and who loves its parents, without doubting their love and tenderness for an instant. [...] It has been said that the only real regret lies in not being a saint; we could also say that there is only one real kind of poverty: not living as children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ.”² _

“THE SAINT is exactly that man, that woman, who, responding with joy and generosity to Christ’s call, leaves

everything to follow him.”³ We might think that the “everything” Peter and some of the other apostles left was very little: an old boat, a simple house, and not much else. But St. Gregory the Great comments, “One has left much who has abandoned everything, even if it is little.”⁴ Moreover, they left their “everything” promptly. They did not stop to calculate the pros and cons, because they had discovered something more important.

Leaving “everything” means, above all, reorienting our interior world: our feelings, will, decisions, plans, and ideas. This is what the first disciples did, and it is what matters most: it enables us to walk with God. “For one has not left everything who remains attached, even if only to oneself. Moreover, it is of no use to have left everything else except oneself because there is no burden

heavier for a person than their own self.”⁵

Leaving everything means accepting Jesus’ invitation to fill ourselves ever more fully with His divine life. “God’s call, the character conferred by Baptism, and grace mean that every single Christian can and should be a living expression of the faith. Every Christian should be ‘another Christ, Christ himself,’ present among men.”⁶ Abandoning everything in this way does not mean denying our personal characteristics or generous ambitions: rather, it means allowing God to fill us so his Gospel infuses every part of our lives.

THE REWARD Christ offers to the apostles for their abandonment (a hundredfold and eternal life) far surpasses anything they could

imagine. This is foretold in the Book of Wisdom: Wisdom *gave the holy ones the reward of their labors, conducted them by a wondrous road, became a shelter for them by day, a starry flame by night* (Wis 10:17).

“This ‘hundredfold’ is comprised of things first possessed and then left, but which shall be restored and multiplied *ad infinitum*. In divesting oneself of possessions, one receives in exchange the comfort of true good; freed from the slavery of things, one earns the freedom of serving out of love; in renouncing possessions, one acquires the joy of giving. As Jesus said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ (cf. Acts 20:35). [...] Only by accepting with humble gratitude the love of the Lord do we free ourselves from the seduction of idols and the blindness of our illusions. Money, pleasure, and success dazzle but then disappoint: they promise life but procure death. The Lord asks

us to detach ourselves from these false riches in order to enter into true life, the full, authentic, luminous life.”⁷

“If we are even a little generous,” said St. Josemaría, “ God will always surpass us: He gives us much more than what we give Him. We always come out ahead; it’s a winning hand.”⁸ And he sought Mary’s intercession: “I ask the Mother of God to be ready to smile at us, to want to smile at us, and she will smile at us. Moreover, she will multiply your generosity on earth a thousandfold, not just a hundredfold!”⁹

1 Saint Teresa of Calcutta, *El amor más grande*, New World Library, Canada 1998, p. 40 (unofficial translation).

2 Pope Francis, Message, 26-XII-2013.

3 Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, 15-X-2006.

4 St. Gregory the Great, Homily 5 on the Gospel.

5 St. Peter Damian, Sermon 9.

6 St. Josemaría, *Conversations*, no. 58.

7 Pope Francis, Angelus, 11-X-2015.

8 St. Josemaría, Notes from a family gathering, 13-IV-1974.

9 St. Josemaría, Notes from a family gathering, 19-XI-1972.