

FAITH AND REASON

God's door is always open to our suffering: Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good Morning, As we read the Bible, we continually come across prayers of various types. But we also find a book made up solely of prayers, a book that has become the native land, gymnasium and home of countless men and women of prayer. It is the Book of Psalms. There are 150 Psalms to pray. The Catechism affirms that every Psalm "possesses such direct simplicity that it can be prayed in truth by men of all times and conditions" (ccc, 2588). As we read and reread the Psalms, we learn the language of prayer. God the Father, indeed, with his Spirit, inspired them in the heart of King David and others who prayed, in order to teach every man and woman how to praise him, how to thank him and supplicate him; how to invoke him in joy and in suffering, and how to recount the wonders of his works and of his Law. In short, the Psalms are the Word of God that we human beings use to speak with him.

In this book we do not encounter ethereal people, abstract people, those who confuse prayer with an aesthetic or alienating experience. The Psalms are not texts created on paper; they are invocations, often dramatic, that spring from lived existence. To pray them it is enough for us to be what we are. We must not forget that to pray well we must pray as we are, without embellishment. One must not embellish the soul to pray. "Lord, I am like this", and go in front of the Lord as we are, with the good things and also with the bad things that no one knows about, but that we inwardly know. In the Psalms we hear the voices of men and women of prayer in flesh and blood, whose life, like that of us all, is fraught with problems, hardships and uncertainties. The Psalmist does not radically contest this suffering: he knows that it is part of living. In the Psalms, however, suffering is transformed into a question. From suffering to questioning.

And among the many questions, there is one that remains suspended, like an incessant cry that runs throughout the entire book from beginning to end. A question that we repeat many times: "Until when, Lord? Until when?" Every suffering calls for liberation, every tear calls for consolation, every wound awaits healing, every slander a sentence of absolution. "Until when, Lord, will I have to suffer this? Listen to me, Lord!" How many times we have prayed like this, with "Until when?", enough now, Lord!

By constantly asking such questions, the Psalms teach us not to get used to pain and remind us that life is not saved unless it is healed. The existence of each human being is but a breath, his or her story is fleeting, but the prayerful know that they are precious in the eyes of God, and so it makes sense to cry out. And this is important. When we pray, we do so because we know we are precious in God's eyes. It is the grace of the Holy Spirit that, from within, inspires in us this awareness: of being precious in the eyes of God. And therefore, we are moved to pray.

The prayer of the Psalms is the testimony of this cry: a multiple cry, because in life suffering takes a thousand forms, and takes the name of sickness, hatred, war, persecution, distrust... Until the supreme "scandal", that of death. Death appears in the Psalter as man's most unreasonable enemy: what crime deserves such cruel punishment, which involves annihilation and the end? The prayer of the Psalms asks God to intervene where all human efforts are in vain. That is why prayer, in and of itself, is the way of salvation and the beginning of salvation.

Everyone suffers in this world: whether they believe in God or reject Him. But in the Psalter, pain becomes a relationship, rapport: a cry for help waiting to intercept a listening ear. It cannot remain meaningless, without purpose. Even the pains we suffer cannot be merely specific cases of a universal law: they are always "my" tears, Think about this: tears are not universal, they are "my" tears. Everyone has their own. "My" tears and "my" pain drive me to go ahead in prayer. They are "my" tears, that no one has ever shed before me. Yes, many have wept, many. But "my" tears are mine, "My" pain is my own, "my" suffering is my own.

Before entering the Hall, I met the parents of that priest of the diocese of Como who was killed: he was killed precisely in his service of helping. The tears of those parents are "their" own tears, and each of them knows how much he or she has suffered in seeing this son who gave his life in service to the poor. When we want to console somebody, we cannot find the words. Why? Because we cannot arrive at his or her pain, because "their" suffering is "their" own, his tears are his own. The same is true of us: the tears, "my" suffering is mine, the tears are "mine", the tears are mine, and with these tears, with this suffering I turn to the Lord.

All human suffering is sacred to God. So prays the prayer of Psalm 56: "Thou hast kept count of my tossings; put thou my tears in thy bottle! Are they not in thy book?" (v. 8). Before God we are not strangers, or numbers. We are faces and hearts, known one by one, by name. In the Psalms, the believer finds an answer. He knows that even if all human doors were barred, God's door is open. Even if the whole world had issued a verdict of condemnation, there is salvation in God.

"The Lord listens": sometimes in prayer it is enough to know this. Problems are not always solved. Those who pray are not deluded: they know that many questions of life down here remain unresolved, with no way out; suffering will accompany us and, after one battle, others will await us. But if we are listened to, everything becomes more bearable... **Pope Francis, Paul VI Audience Hall**

Wednesday, 14 October 2020

Jesus Alone: Two verses in the Gospel of John should not be separated: the last verse of chapter seven and the first verse of chapter eight. "And they went back each to his own home" (John 7:53) "Jesus meanwhile, went to the Mount of Olive" (John 8:1) **Bishop Fulton Sheen**

The Way, the Truth, the Life: He is the life that I want to live. He is the light that I want to radiate. He is the Way to the Father. He is the love with which I want to love. He is the Joy that I want to share. He is the Peace that I want to sow. Jesus is everything to me. Without him, I can do nothing.... **Mother Teresa of Calcutta**

When you Count: Count your garden by the flowers, never by the leaves that fall. Count your days by golden hours, do not remember clouds at all. Count your night by stars not shadows. Count your life with smiles, not tears. And with joy on every birthday, count your age by friends not years.

I have left off all devotions and prayers that are not required for me, and I occupy myself solely with keeping myself in God's holy presence. I do this simply by keeping my attention on God and by being generally and loving aware of him...**Brother Lawrence**

A Thought for the Day

Sunday Grace is nothing else but a certain beginning of glory within us.
Monday I knew nothing. I was nothing. For this reason God picked me out.
Tuesday He who labors as he prays lifts his heart to God with his hands.
Wednesday Your God is ever beside you indeed, He is even within you.
Thursday The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works.
Friday The world would have peace if only men of politics would follow the Gospels.
Saturday Think well. Speak well. Do well. These three things, through the mercy of God, will make a man go to Heaven.

Listen to Me: Just stop a while and listen to me; I have a question to ask you, why are you ignoring my Mother? I chose Her to be my very own, and greater perfection was never known" are you ignoring my Mother? I was born through her, so we all would be spiritual member of one Family. Why are you ignoring my Mother?

I sent her to you with a message Divine. Not once or twice, but many times. And still you are ignoring my Mother. Like a wreath of graces, her Rosary was given to her loving children, as a Key to Heaven ... And still you are ignoring My Mother. She came with my message to La Salette. But those requests have not been met.

Why are you ignoring my Mother? I sent Her again to the cave at Lourdes. But just as before, you spurned her words.

Why are you ignoring my Mother? To the fields of Fatima, again she came, for prayers and sacrifice in her Son's name, and still you are ignoring my Mother. She came again to Garabandal, but you are not heeding her latest call. Why are you ignoring my Mother? I sent her to earth from Heaven above, so you would give her your honor and love. And still you are ignoring my Mother. When you ignore my Mother, you ignore her Son. Because to me she is the dearest one. Why are you ignoring my Mother? You had better amend, and do not tarry. The ideal way to Jesus is Mary. So, stop ignoring my Mother.

The Abused Savior: It is clear that Jesus did not find his inner peace from his environment. As a baby in his Mother's arms no doubt he had the security which is every baby's birthright..... When he called his twelve Apostles to be with him, they were not nice, quiet people with whom it was easy to live. Two of them, who seem gentle enough to us were called "O the Sons of Thunder" They all seemed to have quarreled for precedence. They all misunderstood Christ's purposes, and they all left him when he needed them most. He died almost alone, his cause apparently defeated, his followers scattered, his body tortured, his mind just before his death in the agony of what felt like desertion. Yet perhaps in his last words he gave us a lifetime secret: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" **Leslie Weatherhead**

In His Will is Our Peace

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