

# FAITH AND REASON

**United in fraternity beyond division:** "Do not be afraid to walk together, overcoming divisions and mistrust, united in fraternity, in the direction that Jesus indicates in the Gospel", Pope Francis said in a message sent Friday, 15 July, to the people of the Dominican Republic, for the Jubilee Year of Altagracia, which marks the 100th anniversary of the coronation of the image of Our Lady of Altagracia, patron of the Caribbean country. Among the various initiatives proposed are numerous Marian pilgrimages and the consecration of families and institutions to the Virgin Mary on the 21st of every month. The concluding celebrations will be held at the shrine of Altagracia on 15 August and will be presided over by Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, Substitute of the Secretariat of State, on the Pope's behalf. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's message.

I greet with affection the brothers and sisters of the beloved Dominican Republic, who are preparing to celebrate, with love and gratitude, the centenary of the canonical coronation of Our Lady of Altagracia, Mother and Protectress of your people. This Marian devotion, so deeply felt by you, is a sign of the Christian roots that characterize and give life to your land. Therefore, I urge you not to lose heart in your witness of faith, to nurture and strengthen, through the example and intercession of the Virgin Mary, your love for Jesus and for the Church. In this event, so important for the Dominican nation, I wished to send as my representative Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, Substitute of the Secretariat of State, whom I have also asked to place the filial homage of the Pope, symbolized by the golden rose, at the feet of our Mother of Altagracia.

God gives us in the Virgin a sign of his closeness and of the infinite tenderness with which he cares for us. The loving gaze of the Mother contemplating the Child who sleeps trustfully on her lap is an invitation for us to learn to see, through her eyes, Jesus present in our neighbors, and to remember that we are part of the same human family called to live together in fraternity and solidarity. The Virgin of Altagracia has been for the Dominican people a source of unity in difficult moments, a sure hand that supports them in the setbacks that arise in their daily lives. With her protection and shelter, she urges us to care for and keep burning the flame of hope that our elders bequeathed to us in faith, and to pass it on to others with humility, trusting in the Lord's grace.

Dear Dominican brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to walk together, overcoming divisions and mistrust, united in fraternity, in the direction that Jesus indicates in the Gospel. Do not hesitate to seek God's will in simplicity, for he is a Father of tenderness who embraces all and never abandons us. Trust that his divine light transforms hearts and leads them to an encounter with him and with their brothers and sisters; and have faith that the power of the Holy Spirit impels you to carry out with joy and constancy works of love and goodness for those who need them most. May Jesus bless you and Our Lady of Altagracia protect and accompany you. And please do not forget to pray for me.... **Fraternally yours, Rome, Saint John Lateran, Francis**

**The Blessed Virgin:** "If therefore you wish to obtain that love, do as I did in the Temple in my earliest youth. For I would rise in the middle of the night and, standing before the altar with complete concentration of mind, I would ask the Lord for his grace by which I might be able to keep these commandments I have mentioned, and I would make seven petitions, one after the other, in prayer before the altar."

"**The first** was, that he would give me his grace by means of which I should be able to fulfill the first commandment, that is, on loving God above all things, with all my heart, all my mind and all my strength."

"**The second** was, that I should be able to fulfill the second commandment, on loving my neighbor as myself, and that he should make me love what he himself loved."

"**The third** was, that I should be able to fulfill the third commandment and that he should make me hate the enemy of the human race because from him derive vice, sin, and whatever he himself hates."

"**The fourth** was, that he should give me humility, patience, kindness, gentleness and other virtues, by which I might be made lovely in his eyes."

"**The fifth** was, that he should allow me to see the time when that blessed virgin should be born who, according to the sayings of the prophets, was to bear his son; and that he would keep safe my eyes with which I might see her, my ears with which I might hear her speak, my tongue with which I might praise her, my hands with which I might touch her, my feet with which I might run to her, my knees on which I might do her homage, and see and do homage to her son lying on her lap."

"**The sixth** was, that he would give me grace by which I might be able to keep all the commandments of the priests and the rules of the Temple."

"**The seventh** and last was that he would deign to keep safe his holy Temple and all his own People, to serve him forever."

**St. Elizabeth of Toss**

**God Deserves To Be Loved:** Admit that God deserves to be loved very much, yea, boundlessly, because He loved us first, He infinite and we nothing, loved us, miserable sinners, with a love so great and so free. This is why I said at the beginning that the measure of our love to God is to love immeasurably. For since our love is toward God, who is infinite and immeasurable, how can we bound or limit the love we owe Him? Besides, our love is not a gift but a debt. And since it is the Godhead who loves us, Himself boundless, eternal, supreme love, of whose greatness there is no end, yea, and His wisdom is infinite, whose peace passes all understanding; since it is He who loves us, I say, can we think of repaying Him grudgingly? "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my strength, in whom I will trust." He is all that I need, all that I long for. My God and my help, I will love Thee for Thy great goodness; not so much as I might, surely, but as much as I can. I cannot love Thee as Thou deserves to be loved, for I cannot love Thee more than my own feebleness permits. I will love Thee more when Thou deems me worthy to receive greater capacity for loving; yet never so perfectly as Thou hast deserved of me.'... **St. Bernard of Clairvaux**

**Those impure words which are spoken in disguise,** and with an affectation of reserve, are the most harmful of all; for just as the sharper the point of a dart, so much deeper it will pierce the flesh, so the sharper an unholy word, the more it penetrates the heart. And as for those who think to show themselves knowing when they say such things, they do not even understand the first object of mutual intercourse among men, who ought rather to be like a hive of bees gathering to make honey by good and useful conversation, than like a wasps' nest, feeding on corruption. If any impertinent person addresses you in unseemly language, show that you are displeased by turning away, or by whatever other method your discretion may indicate... **Saint Francis de Sales**

#### **A Thought For the Day**

**Sunday** Blessed stillness gives birth to blessed children: self-control, love and pure prayer.  
**Monday** From humility of heart proceed serenity of mind, gentleness of conduct, interior peace, and every good.  
**Tuesday** Dear young people, let yourselves be taken over by the light of Christ, and spread that light wherever you are.  
**Wednesday** How happy I am to see myself imperfect and be in need of God's mercy.  
**Thursday** The worst prison would be a closed heart.  
**Friday** In what can I hope, then, or in whom ought I trust, save only in the great mercy of God and the hope of heavenly grace?  
**Saturday** Keep your soul at peace, in order to be able to be attentive and very faithful to the inner movement of the Holy Spirit.

**Prayer Purifies,** Reading Instructs: Prayer purifies us, reading instructs us. Both are good when both are possible. Otherwise, prayer is better than reading. If a man wants to be always in God's company, he must pray regularly and read regularly. When we pray, we talk to God; when we read, God talks to us. All spiritual growth comes from reading and reflection. By reading we learn what we did not know; by reflection we retain what we have learned. Reading the holy Scriptures confers two benefits. It trains the mind to understand them; it turns man's attention from the follies of the world and leads him to the love of God. The conscientious reader will be more concerned to carry out what he has read than merely to acquire knowledge of it. In reading we aim at knowing, but we must put into practice what we have learned in our course of study. The more you devote yourself to study of the sacred utterances, the richer will be your understanding of them, just as the more the soil is tilled, the richer the harvest. The man who is slow to grasp things but who really tries hard is rewarded, equally he who does not cultivate his God-given intellectual ability is condemned for despising his gifts and sinning by sloth. Learning unsupported by grace may get into our ears; it never reaches the heart. But when God's grace touches our innermost minds to bring understanding, his word which has been received by the ear sinks deep into the heart... **Saint Isidore**

**Man cannot live without love.** He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it. This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer "fully reveals man to himself". If we may use the expression, this is the human dimension of the mystery of the Redemption. In this dimension man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity. In the mystery of the Redemption man becomes newly "expressed" and, in a way, is newly created. He is newly created!

**In His Will is Our Peace**  
**Fr. William C. Mooney**

Spiritual Direction and Confession  
Email: [Fr.WCmooney@gmail.com](mailto:Fr.WCmooney@gmail.com)  
Appointments: (904) 824-6625  
Follow on Facebook: [Faith and Reason](#)  
Instagram: [faith\\_and\\_reason](#)