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Meditation:
He Loved Us

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Introduction

"To follow in Christ's footsteps, today's apostle does not need to reform anything, but even less has he to take no part in the contemporary affairs going on around him. He has only to act as the first Christians did, and give life to his environment" (Furrow, 320).

In these days, we have experienced intense emotions. The death of Pope Francis filled our hearts with sadness. In those difficult hours, we felt like the crowds that the Gospel says were "like sheep without a shepherd" (Mt 9:36). Then, on Easter Sunday, we received his final blessing and, in the light of the resurrection, we experienced the days that followed in the certainty that the Lord never abandons his people, but gathers them when they are scattered and

guards them "as a shepherd guards his flock" (Jer 31:10) (...).

I was chosen, without any merit of my own, and now, with fear and trembling, I come to you as a brother, who desires to be the servant of your faith and your joy, walking with you on the path of God's love, for he wants us all to be united in one family (...).

Brothers and sisters, I would like that our first great desire be for a united Church, a sign of unity and communion, which becomes a leaven for a reconciled world.

In this our time, we still see too much discord, too many wounds caused by hatred, violence, prejudice, the fear of difference, and an economic paradigm that exploits the Earth's resources and marginalises the poorest. For our part, we want to be a small

leaven of unity, communion and fraternity within the world. We want to say to the world, with humility and joy: Look to Christ! Come closer to him! Welcome his word that enlightens and consoles! Listen to his offer of love and become his one family: in the one Christ, we are one. This is the path to follow together, among ourselves but also with our sister Christian churches, with those who follow other religious paths, with those who are searching for God, with all women and men of good will, in order to build a new world where peace reigns!

This is the missionary spirit that must animate us; not closing ourselves off in our small groups, nor feeling superior to the world. We are called to offer God's love to everyone, in order to achieve that unity which does not cancel out

differences but values the personal history of each person and the social and religious culture of every people" (Pope Leo XIV, Homily for the beginning of his pontificate).

A recollection is a period of time dedicated exclusively to God, with periods of mental and vocal prayer (the meditations and recitation of the Rosary), spiritual reading, and silence with God. As the name implies, it's an opportunity to recollect who we are in front of our loving Father, God, and to bring our whole selves and full attention to Him.

You may wish to pause between the different parts of the recollection to allow each one to make an impression. The Holy Spirit speaks quietly.

Spiritual Reading

In his first general audience, Pope Leo XIV spoke about the parable of the sower who throws the seed on all kinds of soil.



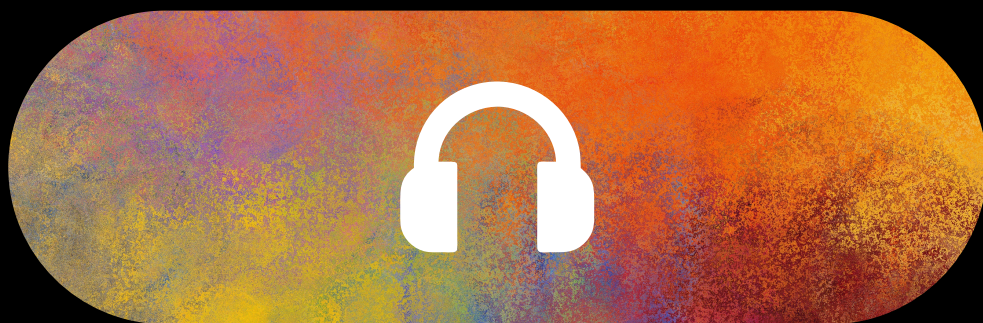
Afterwards, you can spend a few minutes with the New Testament. Click for today's Gospel and a short commentary.



Spiritual reading means thoughtfully reading spiritual texts like Sacred Scripture and the lives and writings of the saints in order to “build up a store of fuel” that later feeds our prayer (cf. The Way, no. 117).

Meditation

All Christians are called to give life to their environment by sharing what we've received from God.



A meditation is short period of guided mental prayer with the preacher, a priest, talking to God out loud on a set topic, usually a theme from the Gospels. What matters most is your personal conversation with God. The preacher's goal is to inspire your prayer by giving you light and moving your heart. You may find it helpful to spend more time on certain ideas, follow your own train of thought when the priest's words inspire something particular in you, or choose an image to keep pondering after the recollection or in your next time of prayer.

 30 min

Examination of Conscience

We thank God for our new Pope Leo XIV. Do I pray for him with filial affection, asking that the Holy Spirit enlighten and sustain him in his service to the Church? Do I understand that through prayer, sacrifice, and unity are ways of supporting the Pope?

"Jesus, I put myself trustingly in Your arms, hiding my head on Your loving breast, my heart touching Yours: I want what You want, in everything" (The Forge, 529). Do I want my heart to be more and more like the Heart of Christ? How do I try to learn from Jesus' reactions, expressions, gentleness, patience, signs of affection, etc., seen in the Gospel? Do I ask God to give my spouse, children, and friends generous hearts too?

"Jesus saw a tax collector, and when he looked at him with a feeling of love and chose him, he said to him, 'Follow me'" (St. Bede the Venerable, Homily 21). Does realizing that Jesus looks at me with the same love with which He looked at Matthew fill me with peace? Do I try to look at others the way Christ does?

The works of mercy ensure that our behaviour reflects Christ's life, especially in this Jubilee of Hope. Do I try to console the suffering, treat the sick with patience and affection, teach the ignorant, and give good advice to people who need it? How can I be more generous with my time? Do I realize that the works of mercy begin in my own family?

How do I show patience and affection to the sick in my family, dedicating time to the people around me who are most in need? Am I a kind

person? Do I try to look at problems positively?

How do St. Josemaria's teachings nourish my prayer and my relationship with our Lord? Do I ask for his intercession to help me take care of my family and friends?

St. Josemaria used to say that he wanted to leave his children in Opus Dei, as their inheritance, great love for freedom and a good sense of humor. Are these gifts present in my life? How can I grow in them?



Pope Francis describes examining our conscience as "the good habit of calmly rereading what happens in our day, learning to note in our evaluations and choices what we give most importance to, what we are looking for and why, and what we eventually find" (Audience, 5-X-2022). The questions in this examination of conscience are related to the themes of this month's recollection and are meant to help us

look past the surface and ask God how we have responded to his love for us. It can help to start by calling on the Holy Spirit, asking for light, and to end with an act of contrition, expressing sorrow for our sins and asking for help to stay close to God.

Holy Rosary

The Rosary is a traditional Catholic prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother, asking her to pray for all her children in their time of need. Through the different prayers that make up the Rosary, we tell our Lady that we love her and we contemplate Jesus' life.

Click the button below to go to a guide for praying the Rosary.



 20 min

Meditation

Let the first chapter of Pope Francis' last encyclical, on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, inspire your personal conversation with God.



The touchstone of true prayer is that it changes us and makes us better, but not being able to carry your resolutions out immediately or even discovering new weaknesses is not a reason for discouragement: we grow over time, and falls can help us be humble and grateful to God. With perseverance in prayer, you will notice more peace and joy throughout the day, because you are sure God is with you even when the struggle is difficult.

 30 min