



23. March 2025

MEDITATIONS FOR LENT

“The shield of faith and the sword of the Word”

“Besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.” (Eph 6:16).

The Lord's training of His faithful to be able to resist in battle continues today with the allusion to the shield of faith. It is important that we immediately and swiftly repel the darts of the Evil One, even when they want to penetrate us through our thoughts. The more vigilant we are, the less evil or wrong thoughts will be able to pierce and hurt us. The same applies to useless words, whether spoken or written.

If we use the shield of faith with due care, it will teach us not to even listen to them. What good can it do the soul to occupy itself with contents that lead it away from God? Here it is important that we renounce a false curiosity that can seduce us to listen to unnecessary things and make us believe that we must be informed about everything. We must make a firm decision to let into our soul only that which really serves the kingdom of God, as far as it depends on our will.

It is good that we understand how error infiltrates our soul, for then we can apply this same process to many other areas and experience the quick and also the preventive protection that the ‘shield of faith’ confers on us.

Our mind is receptive to the light of the Holy Spirit. It welcomes the word of God and rejoices in the truth. As the Word moves in the heart, it takes root in it. It is the same with the right doctrine of the Church, which provides an inner certainty of faith. In this way, the mind is enlightened by the Holy Spirit and, in its light, recognises the truth and identifies its good spiritual taste.

When error creeps into religious matters, it obstructs the light of the Holy Spirit and darkens the mind with a false light. Then confusion begins. If the soul gives ear to the false doctrine and accepts it, then its intellectual faculties begin to justify it and make it

part of its way of thinking. Thus, error continues to spread and take root in the person. Once the mind has been obscured by it, it becomes more susceptible to other errors.

This is why I insist that, since *Amoris Laetitia*, false doctrines have continued to spread in the present Pontificate, which are so serious that they can lead to apostasy. In yesterday's meditation, for example, I described how the uniqueness of Jesus Christ has been relativised by stating that all religions are paths to God. With such a statement, we have gone far beyond the pale. That is why it is spiritual wisdom to immediately reject all false thinking, because it leads us away from God. It is noticeable that those who recognised and immediately rejected the false course set by *Amoris Laetitia*, generally also identified the subsequent errors; while those who accepted these new guidelines often remain unaware that they were deceived and are no longer able to recognise even the most absurd deviations.

'Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' (Eph 6:17).

The internalisation of the Word of God - if possible every day - is healing for our minds, for it gives them the right light; and, at the same time, it is a powerful spiritual weapon. In the light of God's Word we examine the value and truthfulness of what we hear. It divides light from darkness, truth from error, the important from the insignificant. The Word of God is the instrument of 'discretion', of discernment of spirits. It unmasks error, for it cannot stand before the Word of the Lord. If we wield this sword, we are well armed for combat.

In our Catholic Church, Sacred Scripture is, together with Tradition and the Magisterium, the force on which we feed. Therefore, the Word of God does not stand alone, so to speak, but over the centuries has been wisely interpreted by the Fathers of the Church, thus creating a great treasure. With good reason we can say that the Catholic Church has been entrusted with the fullness of truth. This is also a certainty that we must know how to defend when in dialogue with Christians of other confessions or with members of other religions. We must always be clear that this is not 'our truth' and that we can neither modify it nor discard it. On the contrary, the Church is the servant of the truth, which is the Lord Himself.

In the next meditation, we will dwell on prayer, which is so powerful and essential that, without it, the battle cannot be spiritual and has no prospect of victory. As a small foretaste, let us listen to what a staretz (as the spiritual fathers are called in the Eastern Church) said to his disciples:

"My children, I beseech you for the love of God, never cease to utter even for an instant the prayer of our Christ. Your lips must unceasingly invoke the Name of Jesus, which destroys the devil and all his machinations"

Of course, we look forward to speaking tomorrow about the powerful weapon of prayer.