

2. April 2025

MEDITATIONS FOR LENT 'The work on our hearts' (Part I)

This Lent we have set ourselves the task of being better disciples of the Lord, especially in the face of the great confusion that the Church is currently experiencing. The disciple has the task of proclaiming and glorifying his Lord. The essential content of this proclamation is found in Sacred Scripture and in the authentic teaching of the Church. This is the criterion that guides us, for as disciples we do not act in our own name but we were sent. It is not for us, therefore, to introduce our own ideas or contents which are alien to the Gospel and which would weaken the witness of Christ. It is also important that our lives be as consistent as possible with what we proclaim, so that our witness in word is not obscured by our way of life.

With these reflections we come to the end of these Lenten meditations. In the last days before Passion Sunday, I will take up the passages of St John's Gospel that remain to be meditated on, with the exception of the resurrection stories, to which we will return after Easter.

In yesterday's meditation, I invited the faithful to offer their sufferings and sacrifices in reparation for the errors of Amoris Laetitia, for the cult of Pachamama, for the aberrant declaration *Fiducia Supplicans* and for the affirmation of the Abu Dhabi document suggesting that all religions lead to God. It is thus an act of atonement.

Unfortunately, the points mentioned are not the only ones. The unjustified restrictions on the Tridentine Mass, which have affected a considerable number of the faithful and priests, should also be mentioned. Nor should we forget that, during the coronavirus crisis, almost all ecclesiastical authorities unreservedly supported the government measures, sometimes even anticipating them or applying them more rigorously than other institutions. All these measures, together with the promotion of a worldwide vaccination campaign with a substance that has not been sufficiently studied, that is morally highly questionable because of its links with abortion and its industry, and that can have disastrous consequences, point to a lack of discernment on the part of the hierarchy.

Its docile submission to government orders, often unnecessary, absurd and even dangerous, leads us to question the state of the Church. The closure of churches, the prohibition of public burials and many other, sometimes absurd, prohibitions that interfered with the life of the faithful were and will never be justified. Also in this context, acts of reparation by those who are aware that the measures taken in the face of the coronavirus were not for the good of the people would be very commendable.

I have touched on many themes in these Lenten meditations. First and foremost, my intention is to make the faithful aware that the course taken by the present leadership of the Church has deviated from the way of the Lord in essential points and that, as a result of this recognition, they should draw the appropriate conclusions. Those who do so will understand that a passive observation of the situation is not enough, because the intoxication of the Mystical Body of Christ is already well advanced.

What can we do to counteract this?

It is a matter of assimilating deeply into our hearts the healing power of truth and love and making it shine in the Church through our lives. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit under whose guidance the inescapable spiritual battle must be fought so that the powers of darkness will yield and the Church will once again shine with the splendour and beauty that God has given her.

Since our lives will be all the more fruitful the more we allow the Holy Spirit to enter us and purify us, it is important that we return again and again to work on our own hearts. This is one of the prerequisites for victory in the spiritual battle, for as Jesus says: *"What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man."* (Mk 7:20-23).

We must therefore watch the movements of our hearts to see if any of these vices are present and if we are being carried away by them. If so, we must immediately present them to the Holy Spirit, consciously renounce them and ask Him to touch our heart with His light so that a change may take place.

Let us take as an example the first of the things mentioned by Jesus: the evil thoughts that come from our heart and that sometimes torment us, trying to create strong negative feelings. When this happens, it is important that we do not stand idly by and watch the scene, nor do we 'argue' with these evil thoughts. Rather, we should immediately reject them and dash them against the rock of Christ, as St Benedict suggested to his monks.

But even in the first stage, we may encounter a great obstacle that tries to prevent us from setting out to confront them. It is pride, which does not want to admit that we have such bad thoughts or other vices, or even to justify them. So pride becomes a serious problem, especially on the spiritual level, which gradually blinds the person. It becomes a kind of inflexible guardian that does not even want to allow the self-knowledge that is so necessary.