



5. March 2026
LENTEN SPIRITUAL RETREAT

Day 16: “A heart that trusts in God and belongs to Him”

Today, on the sixteenth day of our “Lenten retreat,” the prophet Jeremiah reminds us unequivocally in whom we should trust and in whom we should not: *“Thus says the Lord: ‘Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm, whose heart turns away from the Lord.’”* (Jer 17:5). This is a similar exhortation to that found in another valuable saying from the Psalms: *“Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no help.”* (Ps 148:3).

Indeed, it is foolish to seek in people the security that only God can give us. It is a sign that faith has not yet taken root deeply enough in us. That is why we continue to seek false securities that ultimately place a heavy burden on our lives and, in a way, keep us captive. The prophet Jeremiah expresses this reality in strong terms and goes so far as to say that the man who acts in this way is “cursed,” since he turns his heart away from the Lord. In fact, it can become a kind of curse, because, on the one hand, we will never obtain the security we seek in people, and on the other hand, we do not turn to the Lord and thus deprive ourselves of His help in overcoming threatening situations. It will remain so as long as we do not recognize it and set out on the path to God.

Unfortunately, this is not a minor issue, since, for example, fears arising from a lack of trust in God can spread to all areas of our lives and even become constant, albeit unwanted, companions. Even when our hearts do not completely turn away from the Lord, what Jeremiah explains below is true to a certain extent: the man who seeks support in creatures *“is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land”* (v. 6).

The situation changes when we abandon ourselves completely to the Lord and place all our trust in Him. Then we will not only be able to overcome the fears that haunt us and the situations that threaten us, but we will resemble, as it is written, *“a tree planted by water that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit”* (v. 8).

Thus, Jeremiah’s words emphatically invite us to trust unreservedly in the Lord, so that the torrents of His grace may permeate our lives and our hearts may belong completely to Him. Then, whatever happens, the man who trusts in God will be able to face

everything in Him, because the Lord will respond to his trust with His presence, giving him true security and fruitfulness that will allow him to live without worry. Rather, he will have learned to surrender all his concerns to God (cf. 1 Peter 5:7).

Jeremiah continues to speak about the important theme of the human heart and conveys this word of the Lord to us: *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?”* (v. 9).

At first glance, such a statement seems like a hopeless reality, and in fact, it reflects the experience of the human heart. Jesus also tells us bluntly that *“out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man”* (Mt 15:19–20).

In order to grow spiritually, we need to face this reality and urgently desire and seek the conversion of our hearts. The last verse of the reading from Jeremiah suggests the path we must take to achieve this, for it makes it clear: *“I the Lord search the mind and try the heart, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings”* (v. 10).

God knows our hearts to their deepest depths, which even we ourselves cannot fathom. Therefore, here we are shown where help will come from. We must entrust our hearts to our heavenly Father. We must present to Him all the darkness we detect in our hearts and ask Him to touch those shadows with the Holy Spirit so that they may vanish. In addition, we ask Him to illuminate with His light all the darkness that we still carry within us and to make us see it, if that is important for the path of transformation of the heart.

Without fear and with great confidence in God’s mercy, we can embark on this essential journey so that our hearts may become completely free and receptive to the Lord. This process is very important for our entire life of faith, for our hearts must truly become new hearts, capable of love and increasingly filled with the purity of our Lord.

Furthermore, it is also fundamental to our Christian witness. People must perceive how God transforms us, so that our witness of life is convincing and the words we proclaim to them are backed up by our way of life.

So, as the fruit of today’s meditation, we ask the Lord to grant us a new heart, full of trust in Him and belonging to Him without reserve.

Meditation on the reading of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2021/03/04/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2022/03/17/>