



17. February 2024

LENTEN ITINERARY
Day 4: "Serenity in adversity"

Marked with the cross of ashes, we advance on this holy Lenten journey towards deeper conversion. With fasting we provide good wood for the fire of love and in everything we keep our gaze fixed on God, without seeking the praise of men.

Like the disciples, we are on a journey with the Lord, and on this journey there can also be headwinds and even storms, as the Gospels tell us (Mt 8:23-27; Lk 8:22-25; Mk 4:35-41). But the Lord does not leave us alone and will always intervene on our behalf precisely when we think that the boat is sinking and we are defenceless in the face of the storms. In these conditions, the Lord exhorted the disciples to believe and trust in Him. And then He calmed the storm.

Here's an important lesson for us...

As much as we would like the boat of our life to glide smoothly and peacefully, it cannot always be so in this world. Therefore, we have to learn to face adverse circumstances with trust in the Lord, and to see them also as a school through which He forms us. If we want to grow in faith - and we need to do so, lest we become "dwarfs in the faith" - then we cannot be content to drink only "milk", as St. Paul rightly says (1 Cor 3:2), but we need solid food as well. The struggles and adversities we have to face, becoming able to carry our crosses, are solid food.

As our faith grows, we will acquire more courage and strength on our way, which we will need more and more. Then the difficulties that accumulate become trials for us to overcome in the Lord. As a precious fruit, faith takes deeper root in our soul and fear and anxiety disappear.

Adversities may come from within or from without, and we must be prepared for them. This does not mean, by any means, that we have to know everything that might come our way and that our fantasy imagines many scenarios to make us uneasy.

The proper preparation for adversity of all kinds is to deepen our faith daily. St. Paul exhorts us to take up the shield of faith, in order to be able to quench the fiery darts of the evil one (Eph 6:16). He considers those who follow the Lord also as warriors, who must put on the armour of God in order to offer resistance to the unseen enemies: the demons.

As our faith increases and we overcome the trials in the inevitable battles, true serenity also increases. We know and experience that the Lord is always with us and never abandons us, that He gives us everything we need to stand firm in confrontations. And if we are defeated, He lifts us up again.

True serenity comes from trust in the presence of the Lord and the certainty that He will turn everything for the better. This conviction gives us security in the holy journey we have begun. However, our attention should not be focused on the struggles and difficulties that may befall us, but on the Lord Himself.

How, then, can we grow in faith?

We can begin when we first get up in the morning and ask the Lord for the grace of the day ahead. Like the disciples we pray to Him: *"Increase our faith"* (Lk 17:5), and then we present this intention to Him in our religious practices. He will listen to us!

Then we have to be attentive to the course of the day, whether it be the usual things that always present themselves to us, or the unexpected things that may appear. We should always try to remain in an inner dialogue with God and look at the events of the day from His perspective. In this way, our view of life will change more and more. It will no longer be simply a series of various events and obligations that we have to face; but today is exactly the opportunity that the Lord offers us to grow in faith, hope and love.

"This is the day that the Lord has made" (Ps 117:24).

Meditation on the reading of the day: <http://en.elijamission.net/2022/03/05/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <http://en.elijamission.net/2021/02/20/>