

## THE MYSTERIES OF LIGHT

« Moving on from the infancy and the hidden life in Nazareth to the public life of Jesus, our contemplation brings us to those mysteries which may be called in a special way “mysteries of light”. Certainly *the whole mystery of Christ is a mystery of light*. He is the “light of the world” (*Jn 8:12*). Yet this truth emerges in a special way *during the years of his public life*, when he proclaims the Gospel of the Kingdom. In proposing to the Christian community five significant moments – “luminous” mysteries – during this phase of Christ’s life, I think that the following can be fittingly singled out: (1) his Baptism in the Jordan, (2) his self-manifestation at the wedding of Cana, (3) his proclamation of the Kingdom of God, with his call to conversion, (4) his Transfiguration, and finally, (5) his institution of the Eucharist, as the sacramental expression of the Paschal Mystery. Each of these mysteries is a *revelation of the Kingdom now present in the very person of Jesus* » (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae, 21*).

### First Mystery of Light: the Baptism of Jesus

« Here, as Christ descends into the waters, the innocent one who became “sin” for our sake (cf. *2Cor 5:21*), the heavens open wide and the voice of the Father declares him the beloved Son (cf. *Mt 3:17* and parallels), while the Spirit descends on him to invest him with the mission which he is to carry out. » (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae, 21*).

- The first light for our life is the fact that through baptism we have become sons of God ;
- At our Confirmation, we have received the plenitude of the gift of the Holy Spirit ;
- Our whole Christian life is based on these two sacraments ;
- Christian life finds its plenitude in the Eucharist, where the true Christian cult in the Spirit (the Holy Spirit) and in Truth (Christ) is taking place.
- “Surgite, eamus” to rediscover the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.

### Second Mystery of Light: the wedding of Cana

« Another mystery of light is the first of the signs, given at Cana (cf. *Jn 2:1- 12*), when Christ changes water into wine and opens the hearts of the disciples to faith, thanks to the intervention of Mary, the first among believers. The revelation made directly by the Father at the Baptism in the Jordan and echoed by John the Baptist is placed upon Mary’s lips at Cana, and it becomes the great maternal counsel which Mary addresses to the Church of every age: “Do whatever he tells you” (*Jn 2:5*). This counsel is a fitting introduction to the words and signs of Christ’s public ministry and it forms the Marian foundation of all the “mysteries of light” (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae 21*).

- The basis of the link to God is faith ;
- The model of faith / confidence is Mary ;
- The place where faith develops is the Church ;

The Christian’s duty is to deepen his faith, joining the logics of intelligence and the logics of faith (*fides et ratio*);

- The wedding of Cana is the presence of Christ in love between man and woman, in conjugal love ;
- « Surgite, eamus » to deepen our faith ;
- « Surgite, eamus » to live human love, being conscious of Jesus’ presence among us and being eager to accomplish the Father’s will in our life (marriage) ;
- « Surgite, eamus » to live human love according to the model of Jesus Christ who gave his life for the life of the Church (matrimonial life; consecrated life too).

### Third Mystery of Light: the proclamation of the Kingdom

Another mystery of light is the preaching by which Jesus proclaims the coming of the Kingdom of God, calls to conversion (cf. *Mk 1:15*) and forgives the sins of all who draw near to him in humble trust (cf. *Mk 2:3-13; Lk 7:47-48*): the inauguration of that ministry of mercy which he continues to exercise until the end of the world, particularly through the Sacrament of Reconciliation which he has entrusted to his Church (cf. *Jn 20:22-23*) » (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae, 21*).

- The Kingdom of God is a concrete reality and consists of making God reign upon each man’s heart;

- Conversion means a process of submission to the Father's will;
- The development of the Kingdom of God is intimately linked to the personal conversion and at the same time to the sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance;
- The Kingdom of God spreads out thanks to the proclamation of God's word and thanks to apostolate (*martiria*) as well as thanks to the testimony of a life of service (*diaconia*);
- The Kingdom of God as gift and duty;
- "Surgite, eamus" to rediscover the Kingdom of God within us and in the world; time presses : « surgite, eamus » to proclaim the Kingdom of God all over the world ;
- "Surgite, eamus" to rediscover the sacrament of Penance.

#### **Fourth Mystery of Light: Transfiguration**

« The mystery of light *par excellence* is the Transfiguration, traditionally believed to have taken place on Mount Tabor. The glory of the Godhead shines forth from the face of Christ as the Father commands the astonished Apostles to "listen to him" (cf. *Lk* 9:35 and parallels) and to prepare to experience with him the agony of the Passion, so as to come with him to the joy of the Resurrection and a life transfigured by the Holy Spirit » (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 21).

- The contemplation of God's Word as a source of transfiguration of daily life;
- The contemplation of Jesus' face during the Adoration of the Holy Sacrament and in daily life;
- The virtue of hope;
- Personal prayer as a light for the way;
- It is the Holy Spirit who transforms our life in God;
- "Surgite, eamus" to rediscover the face of a merciful God in the world, because violence and sin are defeated in Him;
- "Surgite, eamus" to rediscover and show Christ, the True Winner against evil and sin.

#### **Fifth Mystery of Light: the Institution of the Eucharist**

"A final mystery of light is the institution of the Eucharist, in which Christ offers his body and blood as food under the signs of bread and wine, and testifies "to the end" his love for humanity (*Jn* 13:1), for whose salvation he will offer himself in sacrifice.

In these mysteries, apart from the miracle at Cana, *the presence of Mary remains in the background*. The Gospels make only the briefest reference to her occasional presence at one moment or other during the preaching of Jesus (cf. *Mk* 3:31-5; *Jn* 2:12), and they give no indication that she was present at the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist. Yet the role she assumed at Cana in some way accompanies Christ throughout his ministry". (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 21).

- The Eucharist as light and strength for our way;
- Christian life leads to the Eucharist but it also starts from it;
- Christ in Eucharist is the most intimate and the deepest presence of God in our daily life;

- Christ in Eucharist is the greatest dynamism of our inner conversion and the strength that opens our hearts;
- Christ in Eucharist is the presence of Christ as Priest in his Church;
- "Surgite, eamus" to rediscover the deepest sense of Eucharist;
- "Surgite, eamus" to change this world by the strength and the law of love that Jesus left us in the Eucharist;
- "Surgite, eamus" to rediscover the sacerdotal sense of our life and the meaning of the sacrament of Order in the life of the Church.

### **Meditation of the Mysteries of Light**

#### **With Saint José Maria Escrivá de Balaguer**

#### **First Mystery of Light: the Baptism of Jesus**

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness." Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened (for him), and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove (and) coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying «This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased» (Mt 3, 13-17).

#### Divine filiation

By Baptism, God our Father has taken possession of our life, He has incorporated us to the life of Christ and He has sent us the Holy Spirit. God's strength and power illuminate the face of the earth. We are going to set the earth on fire, in the flames of the fire that you have come to bring on earth!... And the light of your truth, oh Jesus, will illuminate the intelligences in a day without end.

I hear you exclaim, my King, in a strong, always vibrating voice: «*Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi un accendatur?*» (Lc 12, 49) (*"I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!"*). – And I answer – with all my being – with my senses and faculties: «*Ecce ego: quia vocasti me!*» (1 Sam 3, 9) (*"Here I am. You called me"*). Thanks to Baptism, the Lord has put in your soul an indelible seal: you are a son of God. Don't you burn with the desire of having Him loved by all?

(*Holy Rosary. Appendix. First Mystery of Light*).

All men are God's sons. But a son may behave with his father in different ways. We must realise that the Lord, by wanting us to be his sons, has admitted us to live in his house, in the middle of the world: he has wanted us to be members of his family, so that all that is his may be ours; he wants us to treat him with such familiarity and confidence that we even may ask him for the moon, as a child does!

A son of God treats the Lord as a Father; neither with a servile obsequiousness nor with a formal reverence, but with sincerity and confidence. God is not shocked by men; he is not fed up with our infidelities. Our Father in Heaven forgives all offences, when a son turns towards him, when he repents and apologizes. And even the Lord is such a Father that he anticipates our desire of forgiveness: he does the first step by opening his arms to us, with his grace. (...) (*Christ is passing by, 64*).

## Mission of the sons of God

The Christian knows that he is incorporated to Christ by Baptism; that he is made able to fight for Christ thanks to the Confirmation; that he is called to act in the world thanks to his participation to the royal, prophetic and sacerdotal function of Christ; that he has become one with Christ through the Eucharist, sacrament of unity and love. This is why, as Christ, the Christian must live for others, looking with love at all those who surround him as well as at the whole humanity. (...)

It is impossible to separate in Christ his being of God-Man and his function of Redeemer. The Word became flesh and came on earth *ut omnes homines salvifiant*, to save all men. In spite of our miseries and our limits, each one of us is another Christ, the same Christ; we too are called to serve all men. (...). Our Lord has come to bring peace, good news, life to all men. Not only to rich people, nor only to poor people. Not only to wise people, nor only to simple people. To all. To the brothers, because we are all brothers, sons of a same Father, God. This is why there is only one race: the race of God's sons. There is only one colour: the colour of God's sons. And there is only one language: the one that touches the heart and the spirit, and without any noise of words, makes us know God and makes us love each other.

*(Christ is passing by, 64).*

## Second Mystery of Light: the wedding of Cana

"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." (And) Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come". His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you." Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them: "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now." (Jn 2, 1-10).

*(Holy Rosary, Appendix, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mystery of Light).*

Do whatever he tells you (Jn 2, 5).

If our faith is weak, let us invoke Mary. By the miracle of the wedding of Cana, accomplished by Christ at his Mother's request, his disciples believed in him (Jn 2, 11). Mary, our Mother, intercedes continuously with her Son to make him listen to us and reveal himself to us too, so that we may proclaim "You are the Son of God". Give me, oh Jesus, this faith that I really wish! My Mother and my Lady, Holy Virgin Mary, help me to believe!

Saint John reports a marvellous sentence of the Holy Virgin in his Gospel. By telling us the wedding of Cana, the scene that we have just considered, the Evangelist tells us that Mary, speaking to the servants, told them: *Do whatever he tells you* (Jn 2, 5).

The secret is fully here: to lead the souls to stand in front of Jesus and to tell him: *Domine, quid me vis facere?*, Lord, what do you want me to do ? (*Ac 9, 6*).

Christian apostolate – I mean concretely the apostolate of an ordinary Christian, of a man or a woman who live like one of their fellow-creatures – is a great catechesis: through personal contacts, through fair and authentic friendship, the thirst of God awakens in others and helps them discover new horizons: with nature, simply, through the example of a well assumed faith, kind words full of divine strength of truth. Be bold. The help of Mary, *Regina apostolorum*, will not fail. Because Our Lady, who is still Mother, knows how to put her sons in front of

their own responsibilities. To those who approach her and contemplate her life, Mary always grants the great favour of bringing them near the Cross, of putting them in front of the example of God's Son. And in this confrontation where Christian life is being decided, Mary intercedes so that our behaviour may reach the reconciliation of the young brother – you and me – with the unique Son of the Father.

Many conversions, many decisions to serve God are preceded by a meeting with Mary. Our Lady has fed the desire of research, she has stimulated maternally the worries of the soul, she has promoted the wish of a change, of a new life. So then, this "Do whatever he tells you" has been transformed into acts of loving gift, in Christian vocation that will illuminate the whole life from now on.

*(Christ is passing by, 149).*

### **Third Mystery of Light: the proclamation of the Kingdom**

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfilment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. (Mk 1, 14-18).

"This is the time of fulfilment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mk 1, 15). « The entire crowd came to him and he taught them » (Mk 2, 13). Jesus sees these boats on the bank and goes into one of them. How naturally he enters into our own boat! When you get near the Lord, think that he is always very near to you, in you: *regnum Dei intra vos est (Lc 17, 21) – The kingdom of God is among you.* You will find him in your heart. Christ must reign in our soul before all. To make him reign in me, I do need his grace : only with it my most secret heart-beat, my imperceptible sigh, my most insignificant look and my most banal word, even my most elementary feeling, everything will be able to be transformed into a Hosanna to Christ, my King. *Duc in altum*". – Put out into deep water! Reject pessimism that makes you a coward. "*Et laxate retia vestra in capturam*" (Lk 5, 4-5) – and lower your nets for a catch.

*(Holy Rosary, Appendix, 3rd Mystery of Light).*

#### The proclamation of the Kingdom

When Jesus starts his predication on earth, he does not offer a political programme but he says: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Mt 3,2 ; 4,17) ; he entrusts his disciples with the mission of announcing good news (cf. Lk 10,9) and he teaches them how to preach for the coming of the Kingdom (cf. Mt 6,10). Such is the Kingdom of God and his justice, a holy life: what we must seek for before all (cf. Mt 6, 33) and the only really necessary thing (cf. Lk 10, 42).

The Salvation preached by our Lord Jesus Christ is an invitation to all: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. He dispatched his servants to summon the invited guests to the feast" (Mt 22, 2-3). This is why the Lord reveals us that "the Kingdom of God is among you" (Lk 17, 21). Nobody is excluded from salvation, as long as he submits himself freely to the demands of love asked by Christ: to be born again (cf. Jn 3, 5), to become like children, in the simplicity of the spirit (cf. Mk 10, 15 ; Mt 18, 3 ; 5, 3), to remove one's heart from all that separates from God (cf. Mt 19, 23). Jesus wants acts, not only words (cf. Mt 7, 21). He asks for a tenacious effort, because only the one who fights will deserve the eternal inheritance (cf. Mt 11, 12). The one who understands the Kingdom proposed by Christ feels that it is worth giving everything to get it: it is the pearl that the merchant acquires by selling all he has; it is the treasure found in the field (cf. Mt 44, 46). The Kingdom of Heaven is a difficult conquest, and nobody is sure to reach it (cf. Mt 21, 43; 8, 12); but the humble supplication of a repented man wide opens its doors. One of the criminals crucified with Jesus made this prayer to him: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom". And Jesus answered: « Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise » (Lk 23, 42-43).

The reign of Christ is not a way of speaking or a rhetoric figure. Christ is alive, even as a man, with the same body that was implied in the Incarnation, was arisen after death on the cross, and united to his human soul, remains glorious in the person of the Word. Only by him, everything that lives may remain alive.

*(Christ is passing by, 180).*

“The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent are taking it by force” (Mt 11, 12).

This strength is not a violence against others but a strength of the soul to fight against one's own weaknesses and miseries, the courage of not hiding one's infidelities, the boldness of confessing faith even when the environment is hostile.

Among the occupations of the day, when it is necessary to defeat a trend to selfishness, when we feel the joy of friendship with other men, at any moment, the Christian must renew his meeting with God. By Christ and in the Holy Spirit, the Christian may reach the intimacy of God Father and goes along the way that leads to the Kingdom, which is not from this world but which starts and is prepared in this world.

*(Christ is passing by, 116).*

While we are waiting for the return of the Lord, who will come to take full possession of his Kingdom, we cannot stand with arms folded. The expansion of the Kingdom of God is not only the official duty of the members of the Church who represent Christ because they have received the sacred powers from him. “*Vos autem estis corpus Christi*” (1 Co 12, 27), “Now you are Christ's body”, the Apostle warns us, and you have received the precise mandate of « negotiating » till the end.

*(Christ is passing by, 121).*

Let Jesus increase in us

Since the time of our first conscious decision to live integrally the doctrine of Christ, we have done a lot of steps on the road of faithfulness to his Word. And yet, isn't it true that so many things still remain to be done? Isn't it true that above all so much pride remains? Undoubtedly, there is a need of a new change, of a more thorough loyalty, of a deeper humbleness, in order to make our selfishness decrease and to have Christ increase in us; as a matter of fact, “*illum oportet crescere, me autem minui*”, He must increase; I must decrease (Jn 3, 30).

We cannot remain inert. We must move forward towards the aim indicated by saint Paul: « yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me' (Ga 2, 20). The ambition is great and noble: it is the identification to Christ, holiness. Besides, there is no other road if we want to be coherent with the divine life that God himself, through baptism, has put in our souls. To move forward means to progress in holiness; we go backwards, on the contrary, when we renounce to the development of Christian life. The fire of God's love needs to be fed, to grow every day, to throw deep roots into the soul; and fire is kept alive only if we always burn new things (...).

Do my faithfulness to Christ, my desire of holiness grow? Does apostolic generosity, in my daily life, in my ordinary work, among my colleagues grow? Let everyone answer silently, in his heart, to these questions and he will discover that a new transformation is necessary to have Christ live in us, to have his image reflected clearly in our behaviour.

*(Christ is passing by, 58).*

#### Fourth Mystery of Light: Transfiguration

After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and do not be afraid." And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." (Mt 17, 1-9).

And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light (Mt 17, 2).

Jesus: to see you, to talk to you! To remain like that, just contemplating you, immersed in the immensity of your beauty, without ever, ever stop this contemplation! Oh Jesus, if I could see you! If I could see you to remain injured by my love for you!

And a voice said: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." (Mt 17, 5).

Lord, we are here, ready to hear what you want to tell us. Speak to us; we are paying attention to your voice. May your word, falling into our soul, inflame our will so that it may dash forward with enthusiasm to obey you. « Vultum tuum, Domine, requiram » (Ps 26, 8), your face, Lord, do I seek. I am full of hope when I close my eyes and when I think that the moment will come, when God wants, when I'll be able to see him, not as in a mirror, indistinctly, but then face to face (1 Co 13,12). My being thirsts for God, the living God. When can I go and see the face of God? (Ps 41,3).

*(Holy Rosary, Appendix, 4th Mystery of Light).*

Contemplative in ordinary life

I will never share – even if I respect it – the opinion of the one who separates personal prayer from active life, as if they were incompatible.

As sons of God, we must be contemplative: people who, in the middle of the uproar of the crowd, are able to find the silence of the soul in a permanent dialogue with the Lord; and who are able to keep it, as we keep a Father, as we keep a Friend, whom we love passionately. Our condition of sons of God will lead us – I insist on that – to have a contemplative spirit among all the human activities – light, salt and leaven, thanks to personal prayer, mortification, religious and professional culture – so that this programme may become a reality : the more we are immersed into the world, the more we must belong to God.

*(The Forge, 838 and 740).*

Be convinced that it is not difficult to transform work into a dialogue of prayer. As soon as our "yes" is offered and we have started to work, God is already listening, he already gives us courage.

We have joined the style of contemplative souls, in the middle of daily work! Because we are invaded by the certitude that He sees us, whereas He is asking from us unceasing surpassing: this little sacrifice, this smile to some importunate person, the fact of starting by the less pleasant but the most urgent task, the care given to

ordinary details, perseverance in the accomplishment of our duty when it would be so easy to stop it..., everything just to please God our Father! And maybe on our desk or in a suitable place, which does not attract the attention but helps you to keep your spirit of contemplation awoken, you put a cross, in which you learn the lesson of service for your soul and for your spirit. If you decide – without singularity, without abandoning the world, in the middle of your ordinary occupations – to walk on these contemplative paths, you will immediately feel as a friend of the Master, with the divine mission of opening the divine paths of the earth to the whole humanity. Yes: by your concrete work, you will contribute to extend the Reign of Christ on all continents. One after the other, the hours of work will pass by, offered for the remote nations that are discovering faith, for the Eastern countries where it is savagely forbidden to confess one's religion freely, for the countries of old Christian tradition where it seems that the light of the Gospel is veiled and where the souls struggle in the darkness of ignorance... In this way, what a great value one hour of work will acquire! To persevere with a constant commitment, for some more time, a few minutes, in order to finish everything properly! You are transforming in a simple and practical way contemplation into apostolate, as an imperious need of the heart, beating in unison with the very mild and merciful Heart of Jesus our Lord.

*(Friends of God, 67).*

#### **Fifth Luminous Mystery: the Institution of Eucharist**

« When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it (again) until there is fulfilment in the kingdom of God." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you (that) from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you » (Lk 22, 14-20).

"Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end." (Jn 13, 1). The night was covering the world because the old rites and signs of the infinite mercy of God towards mankind were going to be fully accomplished, opening the way to a true dawn, the new Passover. Eucharist was instituted at night, as a preparation of the dawn of Resurrection. Jesus has remained in Eucharist by love... for you.

- He has remained, knowing very well how men would receive him..., and how you would receive him.
- He has remained, so that you may be fed by him, so that you may visit him and tell him what concerns you. So that, by frequenting him in prayer near the Tabernacle and by receiving Him in the Sacrament, you may become day after day more in love with him and that you may lead other souls – many others! - to follow the same way.
- My child: on this earth, how people in love kiss the flowers, the letter, the memory of a beloved person !...
- And you: could you forget that He is always beside you? Him? Will you forget that you may eat him?
- Lord, let me never fly close to the ground any more! May I always be illuminated by the rays of the divine Sun – Christ – in Eucharist! May my flight never stop, till it finds its rest in your Heart!

*(Holy Rosary, Appendix, Fifth Mystery of Light).*

Let us start right now to ask the Holy Spirit to prepare us to understand each gesture and each word of Jesus: because we want to live of a supernatural life, because the Lord has manifested to us his will of giving himself to us as a food for our soul, and because we recognise that only He has "the words of eternal life" (Jn 6, 68). Faith makes us proclaim with Simon Peter: « We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God. » (Jn 6, 69). And it is precisely this faith, united to our devotion, which pushes us to imitate John's boldness in so important moments: to come near to Jesus and

lean back against the Master's chest (cf. Jn 13,25), the chest of the one who loved his own to the end – as we have just heard.

Think of such a human experience of two friends saying goodbye before a separation. They would like to remain together for ever but their duty – just any duty – obliges them to be separated. They dream of remaining together but they can't. Human love – although it is great, it is always limited – has to use a symbol: the two people, before leaving each other, will exchange a memory, maybe a photograph, with such a fiery dedication that it could almost burn the card. They cannot do more, because the creatures' power does not reach their desire.

But what we cannot do, the Lord can do it. Jesus Christ, perfectly God and perfectly Man, does not leave us a symbol but reality: he leaves us himself. He will go back to the Father and at the same time he will remain among men. He will not only leave us a gift, reminding us of him, or a picture that will faint with the time passing, like a photograph that loses its colours quite soon, that becomes yellow and has no sense for those who were not protagonists of that moment of affection. Under the species of bread and wine, it is Him, really present: with his Body, his Blood, his Soul and his Divinity.

*(Christ is passing by, 88).*

#### Mass, the centre of internal life

Before all, we must love the Holy Mass, which must be the centre of our day. If we are fully present at Mass, how is it then possible, for the rest of the day, not to have a thought in God, not to have the will to remain in His presence to work as He worked and to love as He loved? Let us learn to thank the Lord for another delicacy of love from him: not to limit his presence to the moment of the Sacrifice on the altar, but to have decided to remain in the Holy Host kept in the tabernacle.

I must confess that for me the tabernacle is like Bethany: the quiet and peaceful place where Christ is, where we can tell him our worries and sorrows, our aspirations and joys, with the same simplicity, the same spontaneity as Martha, Mary and Lazarus had when they spoke to him. This is why I am glad when I walk along the streets of a town or a village and when I discover, even from far away, the profile of a church: it is another tabernacle, another occasion for the soul to escape, by the desire, towards the Lord in his Sacrament.

*(Christ is passing by, 154).*

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