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November 23 Monday

CCC 2707 There are as many and varied methods of meditation as there are spiritual masters. Christians owe it to themselves to develop the desire to meditate regularly, lest they come to resemble the three first kinds of soil in the parable of the sower.¹ But a method is only a guide; the important thing is to advance, with the Holy Spirit, along the one way of prayer: Christ Jesus.

CCC 2708 Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. This mobilization of faculties is necessary in order to deepen our convictions of faith, prompt the conversion of our heart, and strengthen our will to follow Christ. Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in *lectio divina* or the rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him.

November 24 Tuesday

CCC 2709 What is contemplative prayer? St. Teresa answers: "Contemplative prayer [oracion mental] in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us."²

CCC 2710 One does not undertake contemplative prayer only when one has the time: one makes time for the Lord, with the firm determination not to give up, no matter what trials and dryness one may encounter. One cannot always meditate, but one can always enter into inner prayer, ... The heart is the place of this quest and encounter, in poverty and in faith.

November 25 Wednesday

CCC 2712 Contemplative prayer is the prayer of the child of God, of the forgiven sinner who agrees to welcome the love by which he is loved and who wants to respond to it by loving even more.³ But he knows that the love he is returning is poured out by the Spirit in his heart, for everything is grace from God. Contemplative prayer is the poor and humble surrender to the loving will of the Father in ever deeper union with his beloved Son.

¹ Cf. ⇒ Mk 4:4-7, ⇒ 15-19.

² St. Teresa of Jesus, the Book of Her Life, 8,5 in the Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila, tr. K Kavanaugh, OCD, and O. Rodriguez, OCD Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1976), I, 67.

³ Cf. ⇒ Lk 7:36-50; ⇒ 19:1-10.

November 26 Thursday

CCC 2713 ... Contemplative prayer is a communion in which the Holy Trinity conforms man, the image of God, "to his likeness."

CCC 2716 Contemplative prayer is hearing the Word of God. Far from being passive, such attentiveness is the obedience of faith, the unconditional acceptance of a servant, and the loving commitment of a child. It participates in the "Yes" of the Son become servant and the Fiat of God's lowly handmaid.

November 27 Friday

CCC 2726 In the battle of prayer, we must face in ourselves and around us erroneous notions of prayer. Some people view prayer as a simple psychological activity, others as an effort of concentration to reach a mental void. Still others reduce prayer to ritual words and postures. Many Christians unconsciously regard prayer as an occupation that is incompatible with all the other things they have to do: they "don't have the time." Those who seek God by prayer are quickly discouraged because they do not know that prayer comes also from the Holy Spirit and not from themselves alone.

November 28 Saturday

CCC 2732 The most common yet most hidden temptation is our lack of faith. It expresses itself less by declared incredulity than by our actual preferences. When we begin to pray, a thousand labors or cares thought to be urgent vie for priority; once again, it is the moment of truth for the heart: what is its real love? Sometimes we turn to the Lord as a last resort, but do we really believe he is? Sometimes we enlist the Lord as an ally, but our heart remains presumptuous. In each case, our lack of faith reveals that we do not yet share in the disposition of a humble heart:

"Apart from me, you can do nothing."⁴

November 29 Sunday

CCC 2734 Filial trust is tested - it proves itself - in tribulation.⁵ The principal difficulty concerns the prayer of petition, for oneself or for others in intercession. Some even stop praying because they think their petition is not heard. Here two questions should be asked: Why do we think our petition has not been heard? How is our prayer heard, how is it "efficacious"?

CCC 2736 Are we convinced that "we do not know how to pray as we ought"?⁶ Are we asking God for "what is good for us"? Our Father knows what we need before we ask him,⁷ but he awaits our petition because the dignity of his children lies in their freedom. We must pray, then, with his Spirit of freedom, to be able truly to know what he wants.⁸

⁴ ⇒ Jn 15:5.

⁵ ⇒ Rom 5:3-5.

⁶ Rom 8:26

⁷ Cf. ⇒ Mt 6:8

⁸ Cf. ⇒ Rom 8:27.