

Dearest Ones,

Once again, Patrizia and I would like to share some reflections with you, grateful as we are for the fellowship we have in the Good Shepherd, thanks to Sofia and Gianna, throughout our "world of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd."

Here is Patrizia's reflection:

This morning, before listening to Mass on television, I thought a little more about the Eucharist that we live in this time. We know that during the most important part of the Mass, the Eucharistic Prayer, Jesus says "*Do **this** in memory of me...*". After having given all of Himself to us, to all people of all times, it is a little as if He had made a will. I have felt invited to dig into this message: "*Do this...*". What is **this**? And then "*in memory of me.*" How do we do **this** today? How do we make memory a memorial? Many of us in many countries cannot participate in the Eucharistic celebration. I thought then that today we could translate the rite into daily life. In John's Gospel the story of the Last Supper does not report Jesus' words over bread and wine, but the gesture of washing the feet is reported, certainly to help us understand that "**do this**" can also refer to helping others. **This** is something that we can be called to do in a very special way in the historical situation in which we find ourselves today. To be God's hands in history, to have God's eyes on the world and on people, to be, each one of us, Christ's bride, responsible, co-responsible with Him for others, for God's family.

To truly assume the role given us by the Holy Spirit gave in baptism: to be priests (doctors, nurses and all those who find themselves next to a dying person can give the blessing), prophets (to discover the signs of the times, to give to those in anguish, in the sadness of loneliness in the midst of this pandemic, the certain hope that God wants good and not evil), martyrs (if it is necessary, then to go and help others, even if this could cause a risk for us).

Then I thought about the phrase we say before receiving the Eucharistic Jesus: "I am not worthy...". Of course, immediately afterwards we also say, "but only say the Word..."; we proclaim that His Word is enough. But we can't take communion today. Well? As always, we find the answer in the Bible. I've been thinking about the parable of the insistent friend. Perhaps God wants the words we say, "I am not worthy" to not just be words that we repeat automatically, in some rote fashion. Perhaps we could say them more consciously throughout this time of Eucharistic fasting. In this way we might become more aware that we really do want Him to make us worthy of His Life. Even the friend of the parable must knock several times. In so doing, we might better understand that we really want that Life of His, that we desire it more than anything else, and that it is worth waiting for...

And now my reflection:

In this time of Lent, the time of conversion, I am meditating in a new way on the prophecy of Isaiah 2:4: "...*they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.*"

With the Level III children, when we present the prophetic texts on the Parousia (the green card material) we ask ourselves which of all these realities we are awaiting can we somehow anticipate?

Well, it seems to me that this prophecy of Isaiah precisely relates to this time we are in and that it is already, in a certain way, being fulfilled. I was very impressed to hear about very high-end fashion industries, producing luxury clothes that only a few can buy - after all, "superfluous" industries - that are converting their products and manufacturing masks and medical aids for everyone! How nice it would be if they could also convert industries that manufacture weapons into industries that produce instruments of salvation! In the meantime, the Secretary of the UN and Pope Francis have already asked for wars to stop. One must go one step further. It makes me think that, since we cannot understand it by ourselves, since we always think that war is about "others" and not "us", now it is history that forces us or will soon force us to understand it, converting not only our hearts, but also our works.

I feel strongly the need to pray that all the peoples who build weapons - and there are many of them - realize that by doing so they are not building peace for themselves, but their own suicide!

We can invite our children to re-read this prophecy and meditate on it together to stir hope in us that it will come true.

We can invite our children - and if possible, we can do it with them - to bring out all the "green cards", the prophecies, asking ourselves once again, in this special, new time of waiting:

- What are we waiting for at Parousia?
- What can we already anticipate on our "blank page"?
- What is *not yet* there and what is *already* there or can be there?

I embrace you

Francesca