

**MY HEART
SAYS TO
YOU, "YOUR
FACE, LORD,
DO I SEEK."**



Monthly Reflection:

November 2020

The fundamental search of man, who is created in God's own image and likeness, should be for the face of God. (Ps. 27:8) What he should see are the works of God and should hear is His word. With deep tender love, Jesus whispers to His disciples, "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." (Lk. 10:23-24). Jesus called them out of the world to belong to His Kingdom and the Father opened their eyes to see its beauty and paradoxes. Yes, that was the Father's gracious will (v. 21)

It was in this light that John cried out "It is the Lord" recognising the man standing far away on the shore as Jesus even though the dawn was just breaking (Jn. 21:7); Mother Teresa saw Jesus even in a leper she found on the street; for Brother Lawrence, a Carmelite monk and a simple cook in the 1600's, "my prayer practice is attention. I carry on a habitual, silent and secret conversation with God that fills me with overwhelming joy." They show us how farther we can go ahead in this journey of seeking the face of God all the time. Let us take humble yet concrete steps to progress in this life of awareness that is held out for us by such saints.

The indwelling presence: Do we not sense that 'it is the Lord' when we receive some insights, guidance or corrections in the stillness of our hearts? Jesus has promised that He and His Father will come and stay in the heart of the one who believes. A habit of disciplined yet lively personal prayer will keep alive the awareness of the indwelling presence of God in our lives which becomes a source of serenity, joy and tranquillity in the myriad experiences of life. Yes, Jesus is in us – always! (cf. 2 Cor. 13:5)

Eucharistic presence: Pope Benedict XVI reminded us, "the happiness you are seeking, the happiness you have a right to enjoy has a name and a face: it is Jesus of Nazareth, hidden in the Eucharist". When you sit before the Blessed Sacrament, you may feel like Hagar whose experience of God was 'You are the One who sees me' (Gn. 16:13) or it could be like Job who felt that God sees him even when he cannot perceive or behold him (Job 23:8-10). St. Maximin Kolbe exclaims Yes! " God dwells in our midst, on the Blessed Sacrament of the altar" and we behold him in faith whether we experience His presence or not. This indeed is the best place in the world where we seek the face of God.

Word of God presence: The experience of our hearts burning as we seek his face in the Word was not a special privilege offered only to the doubting disciples on the way to Emmaus. It is for each one of us too. "For we do need to know it (the Scriptures) well, to have it in our heart and mind, so that at any time, without any book, we can close our eyes and contemplate [Christ's] life, watching it like a movie." (St. José Maria Escriva) What a privilege it is to encounter Him in the Scriptures and in the joy of it, to go out into our workplaces to share it with others.

Community presence: Pope St. John Paul II taught us: "Dear friends, if you learn to discover Jesus in the Eucharist, you will also know how to discover Him in your brothers and sisters, particularly the very poor." Lives of the saints John Paul II and Teresa of Calcutta bear witness to this. Experiencing Jesus' presence in a community or a family, in each member, in their good and bad, "to find, to disclose and to highlight this beauty, which is like that of Christ on the cross, is to lay the foundations of genuine social solidarity and the culture of encounter." (Christus Vivit #183)

The nature presence: Nature speaks volumes of the glory of the Creator. That is why a walk on the green grass, gazing at a budding flower or playing with a cat fills us with happiness. "Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness." (Laudato Si #12) If our eyes and ears, hearts and minds can be tuned to the harmony of nature, we can join with them in their unending song of praise of their Creator.

God is continuously whispering in our hearts," Seek my face"; 'even when my father and mother have forsaken me' (v. 10). Knowing that only His presence can truly satisfy us, let us too continuously respond "Your face Lord do I seek, everywhere, all the time". Distractions on the journey should neither surprise nor sadden us. So too should dryness, discouragement or distaste. "This, then, is your answer whenever you feel tempted to stop praying because it seems to be a waste of time: 'I am here to please God.' (Saint Alphonsus Liguori) And God will truly be pleased when you lift your heart each time to Him and whisper with love "Your face, Lord, do I seek".

