

Meditation 5: Heaven will be so beautiful!

Dear Pilgrims, the day is progressing. We feel the weariness of our journey. Take courage: look towards our goal! The cathedral is approaching. It was in 1912 that Péguy came to entrust Notre-Dame de Chartres with his secrets, his sufferings and his sick children: “Take them, I can’t take it anymore!”

A stroke of audacity which would, in a providential way, resurrect the tradition of pilgrimage: “Others will come to you, O Our Lady!”

Major ideas

- Do we have the desire to see God, like Saint Teresa of Avila?
- Heaven, a perfectly harmonious universe, filled with the happiness of friendship between people
- How do we strongly desire Heaven? What is our belief?
- Contemplate the promises God has reserved for those who love him
- The essential beatitude is seeing God face to face, being with Christ, in the company of angels and saints.

Follow Péguy, the pilgrim

If so many walkers followed Péguy, it is surely because they recognized their condition as “pilgrims”. Did you know, dear pilgrims, that the word “pilgrim” means “foreigner” (in Latin: *peregrinus*)? The Christian is therefore a pilgrim, a foreigner who walks towards his homeland, towards the celestial Jerusalem, symbolised for us by the coveted cathedral of Chartres.

The pilgrimage is an image of the march of our whole life towards Heaven.

The sky...

Friend pilgrim, remember the star of Bethlehem... A tiny thing, bright, fine, sharp, which guided the wise men to the manger. You also have your star!

You are here for a specific reason. Your God-Saviour has a loving plan for you. You don't understand it yet, but one day you will. “Put your foot here! All the hairs of your head are numbered.” The wise men followed the star, they found Jesus.

The twelve apostles believed in Jesus God Saviour and they aroused the world. The star needs a little night to appear... Your crosses, your trials have their reason for being...

You also have your star. Have faith in your star! Your star is the holy hope of Heaven. God who loves you infinitely has prepared wonders for you. Do not be afraid!

We don't think enough about Heaven. We don't talk enough about Heaven... Yet it is Heaven which gives all meaning to our life here on earth.

Jesus left us precise teaching about Heaven. He said enough to inflame our desires. He revealed to us that the fundamental joy of Heaven would be to see God there.



Saint Teresa of Avila put this conviction at the heart of her life. And it was with great determination that she repeated: "I want to see God!"

What is our desire to see God?

Our desire will be proportionate to our conviction. And for our conviction to be strong, we must understand a little this essential joy of Heaven, that of seeing God and loving him accordingly. This will be the first point of meditation.

God will also fill us in Heaven with other joys: the sight of a marvelously beautiful renewed universe, but above all the happiness of friendship between people now perfectly fulfilled in goodness. This will be the second point.

This Heaven that meditation will have helped us to know better, how can we strongly desire it? The last point of the meditation will try to say that...

The main joy of Heaven

The main joy of Heaven will be to see God face to face.

We will participate in Heaven in the very joy of God: that which he experiences in knowing and loving himself, He the Infinite Good. Also, in the parable, the Master says to the good servant, who has done his work well: "Good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your master!" He did not say to him: "Bring my joy into you." God's joy is too great to enter into us. He said, "Enter into my joy," that is to say, participate in this infinite joy that I experience in knowing myself in my eternal beauty! Jesus promises: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God!"

Saint John in one of his epistles and in the Apocalypse echoes the promise of Jesus: he assures us that we will see God face to face. We will forever be like God, because we will see him "as he is", face to face.

The former Cistercian abbot, Benedict XII, drew conclusions from this teaching of the Bible. He solemnly defined the doctrine of the Church on this point, in 1336. Departed souls, pure or completely purified, see the divine essence face to face, with an intuitive vision, without intermediary.

How will this be done? This point is difficult, friend pilgrim, because there is a lot of mystery involved. Remember that to see God directly, and not through an image or an idea, the soul will be elevated by a supernatural light, called "the light of glory".

The great mystic, Saint Angela of Foligno, experienced some fragment of this prodigious joy which is promised to us in Heaven: "When God presents himself to the soul, when the Lord reveals his face, he suddenly carries me away in a dazzling which never resembles itself, eternally varied and new. O fullness, fullness, oh satisfying light, certainty, majesty, nothing approaches your glory! The least dazzling of Heaven surpasses the greatest dazzling of earth!"

Heaven is a thousand miles from the most beautiful things we can imagine. Saint Paul speaks of the eye of man which has not seen, of his ear which has not heard, of his heart which has not foreseen what God has prepared for those who love him.

The essential Joy of Heaven is also: being with Christ. This thought was particularly dear to

Saint Paul; “We will be with the Lord forever!” For Christians who have already sought to live in intimacy with Christ on earth, this reunion in Heaven will be in somehow a wonderful and eternal continuity of this life of friendship maintained here below. The more we love Christ on earth, the greater our joy in Heaven will be.

All this is not an illusion. Jesus Christ did not tell us “some nonsense”, as Péguy says. You too, friend pilgrim, will one day discover in Heaven, in God, an endless renewal of new perfections and you will grasp them with ever-renewed joy. “The infinite good has no limits, the desire it provokes is without measure,” says Saint Gregory of Nyssa.

All this may seem difficult to understand. Have confidence ! God loves you better than anyone. What he has prepared for you in Heaven will fulfill your wildest expectations.

And if you have trouble understanding why immersion in God is so exhilarating, here are some other, simpler joys that God is preparing for you up there. This will be the second point of this meditation.

The Secondary Joys of Heaven

The most beautiful visible realities of the earth are nothing compared to those of the world of the resurrected. Time will tell!

Besides the world of bodies, there is that of spirits. A saint had a vision so beautiful that she thought she would die. She thought she had seen God. But it was only a soul in a state of grace! What will we say in the presence of the angels who surpass us so much and of Mary, the Immaculate Conception, adorned by grace in such a way? Saint Bernadette was asked if the apparition was beautiful. “So beautiful,” she replied, “that one would want to die to see her again!”

One of the most beautiful joys of Heaven will also be to find all those we love there. In Heaven, we will see each other and recognize each other. Saint Cyprian wrote it in the 3rd century: “We are awaited there by a large number of people who are dear to us; we are desired by a crowd of parents, brothers and children, who are actively concerned with our Salvation...”

Saint Gregory the Great exhorted his faithful thus: “Let us therefore seek, dearest brothers, those pastures where we will share the celebration and joy of such fellow citizens. The very happiness of those who rejoice in it invites us to do so... and yet we remain lukewarm when it comes to loving eternity, we burn with no desire, and we do not seek to take part in such a magnificent celebration. Let our desires be inflamed for the goods above: to love them is already to go there.”

Among the other joys of Heaven, there will also be the resurrection of our body on the day of the last judgment: because even if the soul is filled by the essential joy of the beatific vision upon arrival in Paradise, we must wait for the end times for this joy to reflect on our bodies, and we will finally be totally ourselves, body and soul totally beatified.

Friend pilgrim, we still have one last question to ask ourselves: how can we regain such ardour for Heaven? How can we rediscover an ardent desire to see God and participate in the celebration above? This is our last point.

How to find the star of desire that leads to Heaven?

To desire Heaven, one must think of Heaven. You have to want to see God. Let everyone wonder!

- Think about Heaven. This morning's meditation can help you, but thinking about it once is hardly enough. God has provided for each week a day reserved for the resurrection. It's Sunday. Why not take a short time every Sunday to think about eternal life? and renew your desire to see God. A contemporary holy hermit spent an hour every Sunday repeating to himself: "Eternal life, eternal life..." in order to excite anew his desire to see God.
- Desire to see God. Do you think enough, in fact, to strengthen your will on this point? It is only by fixing our attention on an absolutely good reality that we will succeed in detaching ourselves from evil. And what is better than the certainty where we are, of being made to see God?

Friend pilgrim, I recap. In Heaven we will see God. In Heaven we will rejoice with all those we love. It is every day and especially every Sunday that we must renew our desire for Heaven. This is converting: turning your heart away from earth and turning it towards Heaven.

Mary better than anyone, can bring this about in you...

Let us therefore all repeat together, to finish this meditation: "Our Lady of Holy Hope, convert us!"