

## Meditation 9: Prepare your Heaven on earth

Dear pilgrims, your march towards Chartres is coming to an end. The spires of the cathedral are there, almost within reach. Finally or already? Yes, the walk was tough but do you regret it? We did it, we walked together! and God walked with us, and Mary walked before us. How beautiful it was in the end... No, I'm sure you don't regret anything.

### Major ideas

- Our whole life is a pilgrimage
- Thirst for the truth, for wisdom to go towards God
- Charity is illuminating those who doubt the Love of Jesus
- Let the sacraments nourish, heal and form in us the saint that we are called to be.
- Let us pray with simplicity, with our own words and place them on the burning coal of the Holy Spirit
- Let's build a society that places itself at the service of the spiritual



Dear pilgrim, likewise, your life is a pilgrimage towards Heaven. We go together, in the Church; we're drooling but we're happy to go there, to give of ourselves. We fall? Never mind, we confess and return to our chapter, purified and light! Yes, our life is a pilgrimage towards Heaven: faith shows us the direction, hope gives us the desire, charity gives us the foretaste, the beginning, because “the kingdom of Heaven is already among you,” Jesus reveals to us. For the kingdom of Heaven was sown in our souls on the marvellous day of our baptism. It is Grace, which in Heaven will blossom in glory! *Gratia semen Gloriam*, says Saint Thomas with extraordinary conciseness, Grace is the seed of glory...

Preparing one's Heaven on earth is therefore not primarily the fruit of our activity: “Who by dint of gesticulating, asks Our Lord, can add a cubit to his height?” to its spiritual stature, of course, that is to say to its holiness. Certainly we will not go to Heaven without a generous response to God's grace, without obedience to his commandments. But as Saint Paul strives to demonstrate to the Christians of Galatia, the law by itself is incapable of saving us. Only the grace of God saves and prepares for Heaven.

### Getting used to the light of Heaven

Therefore, preparing one's Heaven on earth is first of all giving this seed, this seed, the light it needs to grow and develop. “What are you asking?” says the priest to the catechumen – faith, we answer – and what does faith give you? continues the priest – eternal life!” Have we already taken the time to taste, to savour the truths of our faith? How beautiful, rich, and deep they are! The pagan philosopher Aristotle, in all the power of his mind, had not been able to penetrate the secrets of divine intimacy. The smallest catechized child knows more than him! By tasting the beauty of our faith, we expand our intelligence to the dimensions of Heaven, we prepare the pupils of our soul to welcome the beatific vision. So, let's ask ourselves the question: what do we feed our intelligence with? what is the primary object of our curiosity? Let us hope that this pilgrimage will have given us a taste for the Truth, particularly about Heaven, and will have deepened in us the desire to know even more: “Those who eat me will

still be hungry,” says Wisdom. The more we nourish within us the thirst for Wisdom, the more God will reveal himself to us in the Eternal face to face and the more we will be satisfied with the happiness of the vision.

### **Expand our charity...**

Grace is Light, it is also Love, Charity: “Charity has been poured out in our souls by the grace of the Holy Spirit.” This charity is not a simple human love, however generous it may be; it is the very love of the Heart of Jesus, Love with which Jesus loves his Eternal Father and loves us; charity is a fire that springs from his Sacred Heart: “I have come to light a fire on the earth,” Jesus tells us, “and what do I want other than for it to burn and spread!” Let us therefore not say in confession “I do not have charity”, because except for serious faults, we all have charity in us, through our baptism. Let us say instead: “I did not maintain the fire of charity that God kindled in me; I did not fuel the flame of this charity by throwing in the logs of my good works.” From then on, preparing one's Heaven on earth means letting this baptismal and divine fire consume our hands and feet, through temporal works of mercy: visiting the prisoners, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, etc.

### **...especially apostolic**

May this fire also consume our lips and our tongue through spiritual works of mercy: announcing the Gospel, illuminating those who do not yet have faith, dispelling the darkness of error, reassuring those who doubt, correcting our brothers with disinterestedness and infinite delicacy. “The charity of Christ urges us.” Tonight, tomorrow, I will be back in the world. “What will become of the souls of poor sinners?” moaned Saint Dominic. And as an echo in the 20th century, Charlier, one of the inspirations for this pilgrimage, launched this appeal: “These new barbarians are waiting for the truth which will set them free.” Preparing one's Heaven on earth means letting the fire of charity consume us entirely, emotionally and effectively. Let us live here on earth from the charity of Heaven, and let us expand our hearts to be in Heaven, fixed in a maximum degree of charity.

### **Let divine Life grow in us through the sacraments**

Preparing one's Heaven on earth is therefore letting faith accustom our eyes to the beatific vision, it is letting charity expand our Hearts to the dimensions of the Heart of Jesus, because grace is truth and charity. But grace is still Life. Grace is the very life of God, sown in us on the day of our baptism, a divine life proportioned to our frail humanity, a divine life flowing, so to speak, in the veins of our souls. “Whoever drinks the water that I give him will never thirst again,” Jesus promises the Samaritan woman, “the water that I give him will become in him a source of water springing up into eternal life.” “Give me some of this water,” replied the Samaritan woman. Jesus gave it, poured it from the top of the Cross, it flowed from its open side. The Church does not give us anything else in the sacraments. Preparing one's Heaven on earth means letting the sacraments nourish, heal and form in us the saint that we are called to be.

Dear pilgrims, we discovered or rediscovered during this pilgrimage the beauty of the liturgy, the liberating power of confession. Let us now be faithful to these sacraments: Sunday Mass, even if we were at a wedding the day before... regular confession, at least every month, let's write the next confession in our diaries as soon as we leave the confessional.

### **...and prayer**

The source of living water is the Holy Spirit, Saint John reveals to us. Preparing for Heaven also means going down to the depths of our soul to draw living water, in other words it is meditating, praying. It's so simple, just let the Holy Spirit say: “Abba, Father!” Let us not be

afraid of the poverty of our words, but let us place them on the burning coal of the Holy Spirit in our souls. Then, consumed by the Holy Spirit, assumed by Him, our poor prayer will rise to the Heart of the Father of Heaven in a perfume of pleasant odour. And if our hearts are dry, so much the better in a sense, because what is dry burns better! So, from tomorrow and even from this evening and until the end of our lives, let us be faithful without exception to morning and evening prayer!

### **Christendom, reflection and stepladder of Heaven on earth**

We could not conclude this meditation and this sending without a word on Christendom. Because preparing our Heaven on earth also means making this earth the stepladder of Heaven, the reflection of Heaven, a foretaste of Heaven and a springboard towards Heaven. This is Christendom, a society built by Christians turned towards Heaven and with their feet firmly on the ground. They are monks in search of God who cultivated both the land and fine literature, as Benedict XVI pointed out to the Bernardines. They made Europe without doing it on purpose, observed Dom Gérard. Medieval Christendom is the cathedral of Chartres and so many others, with their spire like a finger pointing towards Heaven; Christendom is courtly love; Christendom is laws that respect the natural order; Christendom is “My God, served first!” and how good it is to live where Jesus is recognised, served, loved... first was born from the crazy joy of knowing that we were saved, of knowing that Jesus was incarnate to take on the temporal, to restore it to its dignity first, to elevate it in the service of the spiritual. This is why with Péguy we say: “France, first must continue!”

There you have it, dear pilgrims, and especially you, dear young ones. Discover the true grandeur of this world which is to be the antechamber of Heaven, the created reflection of the glory of God. Let Christ, his grace, his Church and his liturgy shape a saint in you. Charlier, whom we have already quoted, also said: “It is the greatest honour that we can do to young people to tell them that they are dedicated to holiness.” Hear it for yourself. And go tell it to those who don’t know it yet and yet need to hear it said so much. And see you in Heaven!