

JUBILEE YEAR OF THE APPARITION

Monthly Recollection for Seminarians of La Salette Matha Province

August 2021

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1. Opening Song: Holy Spirit Song

2. Opening Prayer: PRAYER FOR THE MARIAN YEAR

(See the Prayer Card)

3. Scripture Passage

“Mary at La Salette calls the children and teaches them the importance of Eucharist and Prayer”

4. Theme of Meditation:

“Mary at La Salette speaks of the Name of the Lord”

5. Reflection

(This reflection could be either read out or explained as talk without losing the important thoughts of the reflection)

Dear Brothers, Our Lady at La Salette chose insignificant children to communicate her message and in the same way, God chose each one of us in our time to continue proclaim the good news. At La Salette she spoke about the importance of Eucharist and Prayer. She recommended daily prayer and lamented the negligence of Sunday Worship and condemned the work on Sundays.

In his book Gift and Mystery, St John Paul II asked seminarians and priests “Could there be any greater fulfilment than to one day be able to re-present every day in persona Christi the redemptive sacrifice of the Cross?” (p.73). Could there be any greater human accomplishment than to become fully identified with Christ, the God-made-man, and to become ministers of the priesthood of Christ? What a great calling you have received!

Yes, you are called to leave everything - but to gain it all...to lose your life - so as to find it...to give it all - to receive the All. You have to responsibly and maturely know what you are renouncing; then you can truly embrace a life style that clearly represents what you have left behind. But at the same time you must maturely and visibly represent the life that you have found.

Like the call of Maximin and Melanie, every vocation to the priesthood is a great mystery! It is a mystery of the love of God for man. It is a mystery to be pondered, lived and treasured throughout your entire lives. How do you live with a mystery? You live as St. Joseph lived: with a heart of prayer, recollection, silence and total availability to God’s

will. To live with the mystery of your vocation, you must develop a life of prayer, of pondering God's Word, of Eucharistic adoration, of contemplation of His works, and of total trust in Him, His grace, His providence and His power: praying often: Jesus, I trust in you!!! In this year of St. Joseph we can learn more from him.

Priesthood is a gift, which infinitely transcends the individual, but always remember that His grace is sufficient for you (2 Cor 12:9). Recognizing the greatness of the priestly vocation and your own littleness will move you to live in humility. Each one of you offers his humanity to Christ for him to transform you into his priestly image. St. Paul says in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, that "we carry this treasure in earthen vessels" (4:7). You are to recognize – with humility, honesty and also hope – that the treasure of your vocation is deposited in an earthen vessel – in a fragile, weak and imperfect vessel, but at the same time, a vessel that has received the grace to become another Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit and by a strong human, spiritual, intellectual and ascetic formation, your earthen vessel can be transformed into the image of Christ, even to the point of being able to say with St. Paul, "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

Therefore, your formation has the purpose of transformation. To be formed is not simply to be "informed" with new ideas. It is rather to acquire a "new form" – a new life "until Christ is formed in you" (Gal 4:19). It means a transformation of the entire person: your way of thinking, feeling, loving, reacting, acting, serving and relating to others. This formation is not only provided by your formators; it must be a personal decision of each one called to the priestly vocation. It must begin by your personal and clear understanding of your own identity and the values of the priesthood.

The priestly vocation commits men to a way of life inspired by the Gospel and the life of Christ. It is inspired by the sentiments of His heart: His sacrificial love, His poverty, His purity, His obedience, His holiness and missionary zeal. To become one with Christ, 'after his own heart,' you must first know Him, contemplate Him, and enter into the depth of His Heart.

This identification with the Heart and life of Christ, can only be acquired in prayer. St John Paul II said, "Prayer makes the priest and through prayer the priest becomes what he is" (Gift and Mystery, p.88). A man called to the priesthood must first of all be a man of prayer, of communion with God; a man convinced that the time spent with the Lord is always spent in the best way possible.

You are to form yourselves and allow your formators to guide you into this path of holiness. The Church and the world need holy priests. You can one day become guides and teachers only to the extent that you become authentic witnesses.

In this month of August as we celebrate the assumption of Our Lady, let us remember that God gives us also the possibility to be with Him.

(The Sessions breaks for half an hour. After the break the group gathers again in a prayerful atmosphere either in the Chapel or a hall. The Blessed Sacrament exposed, or a room is prepared for group sharing)

6. Meditative Music

7. Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion:

“If you obey the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I am giving you today, loving the Lord, your God, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and ordinances, you will live and grow numerous, and the Lord, your God, will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

“If, however, your heart turns away and you do not obey, but are led astray and bow down to other gods and serve them, I tell you today that you will certainly perish; you will not have a long life on the land which you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: ***I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life,*** then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the Lord, your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to live on the land which the Lord swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to them” (Deuteronomy 30:15-20, emphasis added).

8. Group Sharing Based on the Questions Above

- Am I aware about the sacrifices I have made to follow Christ?
- Do I reflect on the Mystery of Priesthood?
- How Much I need to be transformed to be after “Christ”?

9. Spontaneous Prayers

10. Concluding Prayer

Let us Pray: O Beautiful Lady, you came from highest heaven to remind the young boy Maximin of his father’s uncertainty and worry about providing bread for the coming season. We implore your maternal guidance and protection upon your La Salette family as we travel these untested roads of coronavirus pandemic. We look to a future as a congregation that desires to remain true to our past while negotiating the language and technology of today.

O Beautiful Lady, we grieve the passing of our brothers who succumbed to COVID-19. May they rejoice with you in the halls of heaven. And, dear Lady, we ask you to be a sure help to our brothers who are personally struggling with the coronavirus.

We search for effective ways of focusing our collective gaze to a future blessed by you. Help us to remember that you take notice of our concern and worry for our future. Remind us that you are close to us now and keep us close to Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen

11. Concluding Song: La Salette Song

