

JUBILEE YEAR OF THE APPARITION

Monthly Recollection for Members of La Salette Matha Province

September 2021

“The Message of La Salette Sheds Light on God’s Dream”

1. Opening Song: Holy Spirit Song

2. Opening Prayer: PRAYER FOR THE MARIAN YEAR

(See the Prayer Card)

3. Scripture Passage

Gen 1:26–27

4. Theme of Meditation:

The message of La Salette sheds light on God’s dream

5. Reflection

5.1 Dreaming with the Son and the Mother

“Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (Gen 1:26–27). At the beginning of the book of Genesis and the History of Salvation, we find the “dream of God” for humanity.

We find a similar narrative dynamic at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. In the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus shares with his assembly another dream, that of his public ministry, applying to himself what the Prophet Isaiah writes (Luke 4:14–30). From a narrative point of view, both God and Jesus are characters guided by “goals” and “purposes”. Let us dwell briefly on the figure of Jesus. From the very first moments of his public ministry, Jesus is characterized as a goal-oriented man. The episode of Nazareth, once placed in the context of Luke’s macro-narrative, functions as a programmatic text. This is the “apostolic Magna Charta” of Jesus. In this episode,

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in fact, the objectives of the ministry of Jesus are outlined, expressed through prophetic imagery and language. Approached in this way, the episode of Nazareth allows us to reflect on the importance of having “goals” and “objectives in the Spirit”, both in our religious and apostolic life.

First: setting “goals and purposes in the Spirit” is a spiritual responsibility (see for example Phil 3:12–15). We can live ‘by default’ or creatively design our life-journey following the impulses of the Spirit. We can live by setting ourselves “goals” and “objectives”, or let circumstances decide for us what to do. This is the difference between living and existing, between living simply by reacting to circumstances or living by designing, crafting our path as followers and disciples of Jesus of Nazareth.

Second: “goals and purposes in the Spirit” are statements of faith. They say what is important and relevant to us, and at the same time they testify to our experience of God and also to our trust in Him. Often, great “goals” and “purposes” portray a deep faith, while small “goals” or “purposes” may allude to a shaky and superficial faith (see Eph 3,20–21). Often, the measure of our faith in God decides the measure of our dreams, “goals” or “purposes”.

Third: having, both in our religious and apostolic life, “goals and purposes in the Spirit” avoids the risk of losing focus and direction. “Goals and purposes in the Spirit” avoid the risk of running with incertitude by beating the air in vain (see 1 Cor 9:26).

Fourth: “goals and intentions in the Spirit” motivate us to persist and persevere.

Fifth: “goals and intentions in the Spirit” build and shape our Christian character. As we run the race towards our “goals” and “purposes” we also collaborate with the Spirit in building our character as disciples of Jesus of Nazareth (see Phil 3,12).

Now, like the Son, the Mother also has a dream. A dream that becomes a mission for us. The final statement of the Beautiful Lady of La Salette to Maximin and Melanie reveal her dream: “Make it known to all my people.” A dream “in progress”. Her dream. Our “goal or purpose in the Spirit.”

5.2 Called to identify with God

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Gen 1:26–27).”

God dreamt of man and created him in his own image and likeness. And although, by disobeying, man lost the divine friendship, sin did not destroy this relationship entirely, since God dreamt of the restoration of the human race and, for this reason, sent forth his Son (Jn 3:16). The plan to send the Son was preceded by great men whose faithfulness was put to the test, like Noah, Abraham, Moses, David. With these, and especially after Moses, He dreams of having a whole prophetic people; He dreams of the day when He can purify man, exchange his heart of stone for one of flesh, infuse him with the Holy Spirit. The dream became reality in his Son Jesus Christ who atoned for our sins through his blood shed on the cross. Christ, our peace, gave God the opportunity to bring us closer to him again. The dream is fulfilled on the day of Pentecost with the sending of the Holy Spirit that will create intimacy, relationship and a body whose members are all those who accept the invitation to enter the Kingdom inaugurated by Christ.

God's dream is identified with the will of God who wants "all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). Hence, every man should come to Christ, "the way of truth and life".

"Come closer, my children; don't be afraid. I am here to tell you great news." In this invitation, the messenger speaks on behalf of her beloved Son. She does not bring a new message, she intends to guide us to put into practice the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is exactly where the message of La Salette leads us, to God's dream, in the sense that it seeks to free man from the mire of materialism, secularism and indifference in which he is immersed.

"If they are converted, rocks and stones will become heaps of wheat!" Convert and believe in the Gospel (Mk 1:15) was the great appeal that Jesus made to the world, and in her apparition at La Salette and other places, Mary continues to repeat the same message. Man's conversion is a guarantee of his sanctification and the first step towards the harmony of our planet. Man's state of mind influences the universe to turn to God or to deviate from its Creator. What we are being given to witness today with the Covid-19 pandemic induces us to reconsider our position before God.

The way in which the worldlings have tried to handle the situation by dispensing with God testifies henceforth to man's bewilderment in viewing things from above. A concrete example is the restrictions that have been imposed upon believers in conducting their services in churches at a time when, paradoxically, the opening of supermarkets and events of various kinds have not been impeded. In this situation of worldliness, it is appropriate to censure our silence, which is confused with

a certain conformism. On the contrary, Our Lady strongly affirms the primacy of the spiritual, submitting to God.

5.3 Those destined for Heaven

In his sermon Jesus said, “This is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day” (Jn 6:39). This is God’s plan of action for all time. Called into existence, we are to God “the apple of his eye” for we cooperate in the conception of the new generation. He wishes that every person conceived on earth should partake of life with the Triune God in all of eternity. At the moment of conception man receives an extraordinary gift: the dignity of a potential dweller in Heaven with God and with other human beings.

Mary represents the society that has now completed its earthly pilgrimage. She knows God’s entire plan and comes to show us where this dignity of the heavenly dweller is threatened. With her message, she wants to awaken in us a longing for Heaven; she wants to make us aware of the importance of the encounter with her Son in the Eucharist and of the need to show respect for the One who gave Himself entirely for love.

Melanie and Maximin were simple children, but their account of what they experienced in their encounter with the Beautiful Lady had nothing to do with lying or manipulation. They registered everything perfectly: the dress of a peasant girl had not concealed the heavenly majesty of Our Lady; Her manner of speaking had been so extraordinary that even the foreign language and the long conversation with Her became indelibly imprinted in the memory of the seers, for Her speech was strongly marked by an otherworldly origin, and Her voice, despite the affliction, inspired confidence and compassion in the two children. Mary’s tears had visibly moved Melanie and Maximin, and whenever they recounted the event, they noted this fact, in turn arousing deep emotion in their listeners; Mary’s disappearance itself caused the witnesses of the encounter to reflect on the fact that they had not asked Her to take them with her. Although they did not know who the Lady was, they wanted to go wherever She would go, because the impression made by her presence had been so beautiful and beatifying.

Sad, but also great and necessary, was the news brought to us all on that afternoon of 19 September 1846. The Queen of Heaven and Earth comes to make us aware of who we are to God: we are His children. The only predestination stemming from the simple fact of being a man is to go to Heaven. There is no other

predestination in God's plans. If this plan does not lead man to Heaven, it is only his own fault - because man himself does not want it!

The Mother of God and the Mother of men, by generating the most outstanding Man on earth, Jesus Christ, reminds us that in Her Son we are all brothers and sisters. We enjoy the same dignity as the Son of God, for God has decided to adopt us as His children of His divine election.

Although Mary shows us our shortcomings in following God's plan, when we reflect on His Message, a desire arises within us to pay attention to the things of God and to want to improve our relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Mary opens a window for us to see the reality in which she is already present and towards which she wants to direct us all: Heaven and eternal life with God.

Whoever desires this, strengthens her motherly heart.

6. Meditative Music

7. Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion:

- What "goals or purposes in the Spirit" inspire and motivate my religious, community and pastoral life?
- What do I dream of for my ministry, my local community and my Congregation?
- The spiritual value of mankind determines how well the world functions. What has been the Church's position in the face of a mentality that tends to relegate to second place God's rights over man and our duties towards God?
- Do you realise that in every Mass all the participants are witnesses to the Transfiguration of Jesus on the altar? What do you do for others to make them aware of this

8. Group Sharing Based on the Questions Above (Optional)

9. Spontaneous Prayers

10. Concluding Prayer

Prayer to Mary at the Foot of the Cross

Loving Father,

you sent us Mary, the Beautiful Lady at La Salette,
the Mother of your Son.

Her warm welcome to those two unsuspecting children
and her message of great news touched our hearts.

Her words were direct, yet filled with hope;
challenging but always expressed
from a heart of boundless love
for her wayward children.

As she stood at the foot of the Cross

on that fateful but glorious day,
her heart was broken seeing the suffering of her only Son.
He gave Mary to her new family, the Church,
as First Disciple and guide on our way back to you, Father.
As your Son gave up his spirit, all for love of us,
we, in turn, place our lives in your hands this day.

As we draw closer to you,

may Mary assist us through her intercession
that our lives may be wonderful reflections of your Son,
who lives with you, Father, and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Invocation:

Our Lady of La Salette, Reconciler of Sinners,

Pray without ceasing for us who have recourse to you.

11. Concluding Song: La Salette Song

