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DAY 13

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, LUISA!! WE LOVE YOU!!

Prophet of Mercy

Yesterday, we learned that Therese of Lisieux is a spiritual genius for the way she revolutionized at least one aspect of Catholic spiritual theology. Specifically, she taught us that, because of Divine Mercy, we can become great saints not in spite of our littleness but, rather, because of it! But more than a spiritual genius — which she certainly is — St. Therese is a prophet.

Let me explain.

In the Church today, there's a lot of talk of the "time of mercy," a time of great grace and blessing. Why? Simply put, it's because the times are so evil. In other words, as we learn from Sacred Scripture, in times of great evil, God gives even greater grace: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom 5:20). Now, that's great. But even with such a solid scriptural foundation, we can't simply decide for ourselves that it's a "time of mercy." Such a decision would need to come from God, and someone with authority would have to announce it. Well, Pope Francis has such authority, and he did announce it. Here's what he said: "[L]isten to the voice of the Spirit that speaks to the whole Church in this our time, which is, in fact, the time of mercy."

I am certain of this ... It is the time of mercy in the whole Church. It was instituted by [St.] John Paul II. He had the "intuition" that this was the time of mercy ... It was explicit in [the year] 2000, but it was something that had been maturing in [John Paul's] heart for some time. He had this intuition in his prayer ... It is a consignment that he gave us, but which comes from on High.

So, we're in a time of mercy, and we have that on the authority of the Pope. Of course, while it's been passed on to us by the Pope, it's also a gift that "comes from on High," a gift that comes from God himself.

Now, what if, as a special gift for the time of mercy, God wanted to make it easier than ever before to become a saint?

What if he wanted to give us a special gift of holiness in our day? Of course, he could give such a gift if he wanted to. He's God. But is he giving such a gift? That's the key question. And to answer it, God himself would have to let us know by choosing someone with authority to announce it to us. Well, that's where St. Therese comes in as a prophet.

According to then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI), “[A] prophet is someone who tells the truth on the strength of his contact with God — the truth for today.” Now, St. Therese of Lisieux is such a prophet. As a Doctor of the Church, she teaches us a truth for today with authority, and that truth is this: God wants to work some of his greatest miracles of mercy in the whole history of the Church today. In other words, right now, he wants to take some of the littlest of souls and make them into some of the greatest of saints.

Of course, we covered some of the spiritual mechanics of how he might do this in our reflections of the last two days. But here, I want us to better appreciate what we learned over those days by putting it in the context of a prophetic announcement for the present time of mercy in the Church. More specifically, I want us to see our present preparation for making an Offering to Merciful Love not as an exercise in learning spiritual theology but, rather, as a response to God’s gift of mercy in this time of

mercy. I want us to see our preparation to consecrate ourselves to Divine Mercy as a way of letting God work a great miracle of mercy in us and for our time.

Why is such a context important? It’s important because when we see that our consecration preparation is part of a gift “from on High” for our time, it carries more weight. It helps us appreciate that, by consecrating ourselves to Divine Mercy, we’re letting ourselves be carried into a greater work of the Spirit that’s going on right now, in our day. Moreover, it puts the focus where it belongs, namely, on trusting God.

Let me put it this way. Why couldn’t Jesus work many miracles in his hometown of Nazareth? (See Mk 6:5.) Remember that? All he could do was small miracles, like maybe healing somebody’s ingrown toenail. But why couldn’t he work the big ones? It was because of people’s lack of faith. Think of it! The all-powerful God-man, the one who walks on water, casts out demons, and heals the deaf and the blind — that great man, in a certain sense, is powerless when we don’t give him our faith!

But it’s faith, its trust that unleashes the power of his mercy. That’s why St. Therese so emphasized trust. That’s why Jesus asked St. Faustina to paint an image of Divine Mercy with the signature, “Jesus, I trust in you.” It’s because in this present time of mercy, Jesus wants to work the great miracle of forming the littlest of souls into the greatest of saints. But he needs our trust to do it. So, will we give it to him?

Today's Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, fire of mercy.
Teach me to pray with my whole heart,
“Jesus, I trust in you.”

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Jesus: “Human nature is spirit and body, so the veil of the body inhibits the soul from seeing My truths. Indeed, the sacraments and all other things are veiled. I Myself, the Word of the Father, wore the veil of My Humanity. All My words, My Gospel, were given under the form of examples and similes. The Only ones who understood Me were those who approached Me and listened to Me with faith in their hearts—with humility, and with a desire to know the truths that I revealed to them so that they could put them into practice. In doing so, they broke through the veil that hid My truths and discovered the good within them. Acting with faith, humility and the desire to know My truths, was a work that they performed. And with this work they broke the veil and discovered My truths as they are in themselves. And that is why they remained bound to Me and to the benefits that My truths contained. Others who did not do this work touched the veil of My truths, but not the fruit within. That is why they remained empty. They understood nothing, they turned their backs on Me, and they left Me.

“Such are My truths that I have revealed to you about My Divine Will with so much love. To let them shine like the unveiled suns that they are, souls must do their work. The way to touch them is faith. They must desire these truths, they must want to know them, and they must pray and humble their minds to open them and to let the goodness and the life of My truths enter in to them. If they do this, they shall rend the veil and find something even greater the radiant Sun. Otherwise, they shall remain blind, and I shall repeat to them the saying of the Gospel: ‘You have eyes and you do not see, ears and you do not hear, tongue and yet you are mute.’”

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I was feeling so immersed in the Supreme Fiat, that I felt like a sponge soaked with

Its light. All created things seemed to be bringing me the kiss of the Divine Will, and I could feel the Creator's lips in that kiss, impressing it upon me. The Fiat seemed to me to be carrying the Three Divine Persons with Itself. Now, while I was feeling My mind dissolve in the light of the Fiat, my sweet Jesus came out from within me and said to me: "My daughter, when My Will has Its Kingdom on earth and souls live in My Will, Faith will no longer be clothed in shadows, there will be no more enigmas, but everything will be certain and clear. The light of My Will shall place in created things themselves the clear vision of their Creator. Creatures will touch Him with their own hands in everything that He has done for love of them. Now the human will casts a shadow over Faith, and passions are clouds that obscure the clear light of My Will. And My Will acts like the Sun, when thick clouds form in the lower air. Even though the Sun shines there, the clouds move against the light, and it seems to grow as dark as night. And if one had never seen the Sun, he would find it hard to believe that the Sun exists. But if a strong wind scattered the clouds, who would touch its radiant light with his hands and dare to say that the Sun does not exist? Such is the state in which Faith finds Itself because My Will does not reign. Men are almost like blind people who must rely on others to believe that a God exists. But when My Divine Fiat reigns, Its light will make them take hold of their Creator's existence with their own hands. Then it will no longer be necessary for others to say it—the clouds and shadows will no longer exist."

And while He was saying this, Jesus sent out a wave of joy and of light from His Heart, which will give new life to creatures; and with loving emphasis He added: "How I long for the Kingdom of My Will! It will put an end to the troubles and sorrows of men. Heaven and earth will smile together; Our celebrations and theirs will renew the order of the beginning of Creation. And We will place a veil over everything, so that the celebrations may never be interrupted again."