



June 2024

## 5. From the Word to Life

medicine. This is the situation in our world. There are so many illnesses that afflict our society, but it hardly accepts the balms that would cure it of its ills. It seeks solutions in so many ideologies, programmes, false solutions (power, having, enjoying...), and rejects the one who said: 'Come to me all of you... and I will give you relief'.

- Do I feel the anguish of seeing society, even so many friends and neighbours, disoriented, lost, continuing to seek illusory and false solutions to their problems, rejecting God?
- Do I live my apostolic passion to the point of feeling solidarity and true suffering with my brothers all over the world for the most diverse reasons?
- Do I accept the inevitable difficulties, sufferings of all kinds, and illnesses, as a tool that God uses to teach me things that I would otherwise never understand, as a price to be paid for my solidarity with those who are far from God?
- In my worries and sufferings of any kind, do I unite myself with Jesus Christ, so that nothing that happens to me is useless, but takes on salvific, apostolic dimensions?

## 6. Prayer

### *Act of Surrender*

O My God, I do not know what will happen to me today. All I know is that nothing will happen to me that you have not foreseen and arranged for my greater good from all eternity. This alone is enough for me.

I adore your eternal and impenetrable designs; I submit myself with all my heart for love of you; I offer you the sacrifice of my whole being in union to that of Jesus, my divine Saviour.

I ask you, in his name his name and for his innumerable merits, patience in tribulations and perfect acceptance, so that whatever you will or allow to happen, be for your glory and for my sanctification. (*Prayers of the Pauline Family, p. 24*).

## JEREMIAH, THE PROPHET OF THE 'STIGMATA'

*The entire prophetic and wisdom tradition expresses the dramatic feeling of suffering and passion for God and his people. Jeremiah is the prototype of this experience. His deep rootedness in God enables him to learn that his suffering is the price he must pay to remain faithful to the mandate he has received and to become an instrument for the fulfilment of God's promise: 'I will be their God and they shall be my people' (Jer 31:33).*

### 1. From the Superior General's Letter

«No prophet bears the "stigmata" of passion for God and his people like Jeremiah. (...) In a different, but no less dramatic way, these dispositions characterize the entire prophetic tradition: think of figures such as Moses, Hosea, Isaiah, Ezekiel... Even the wisdom tradition is no exception: in the Psalms the heart is the place in which such experiences they reverberate...It seems that, to accompany the processes of change in the surrounding world (...) the prophet must experience every need first of all on his own person: he is, in fact, the first to have to change. Precisely because Jeremiah experiences and lives what is about to happen, he can become its announcer. (...) Only being deeply rooted in God allows the prophet not to give in to compromises and to face the challenge, without betraying the mandate received... For Jeremiah this is "an uphill road". (...) But it is in this context that he will announce a "new alliance," inscribed in these words of the Lord: "I will be their God and they shall be my people" (Jer 31:31-34)» (*Annual Letter 2023-2024, 3.1. Jeremiah, the prophet of the "stigmata"*).

## 2. The encounter with the Word of God

*The prophet Jeremiah expresses like no other the experience of living in his own person the intense passion for God and his people, to the point of wanting his head to become a fountain of water and his eyes a spring of tears, to mourn the slain of his people.*

«My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick. Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land: “Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?” (“Why have they provoked me to anger with their images, with their foreign idols?”) “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored?» (Jeremiah 8:18-23).

## 3. The Magisterium of the Church

*Pope Francis reflects and teaches us that difficulties and crises are inevitable in human life. And we should not see those moments as misfortunes, but as opportunities for growth, in which God gives us the opportunity not only to prove our faithfulness, but also to make some changes we would otherwise never make. To transform ourselves.*

«A moment of crisis is a moment of choice, it is a moment that places us before the decisions that we must make. All of us, in life, have had and will have moments of crisis (...)

Moments of crisis demand perseverance, silence; staying where we are, steadfast. It is not the moment to make changes. It is the moment of fidelity, of faithfulness to God, of faithfulness to the things [decisions] we had made before. It is also the moment of conversion, because this faithfulness will inspire some kind of change for the better, not to distance us from good.

Moments of peace and moments of crisis. We Christians must learn to manage both. Both. (...) May the Lord send us the Holy Spirit so we may be able to resist the temptations of moments of crisis, to know how to be faithful to the first words, with the hope of living moments of peace later» (Meditation by Pope Francis, 2 May 2020).

## 4. Thought of the Founder

*The person of Jeremiah is but a pale figure of the person of Jesus Christ. It is, He who took upon Himself all the pains and sufferings of humanity and redeemed them by His death on the cross. Fr Alberione teaches us that all our sufferings can become a means of salvation for all humanity if we live them in communion with Christ.*

«The sufferings of the apostolate are to be united with those of Jesus. The apostolate has its fatigues, discouragements, and disappointments. Some do not understand it. But did everyone understand the apostolate of Jesus? Let us think of Him» (*Haec meditare* II 1 1941, p. 82).

«Every apostolate is good, but the cross and passion have redeemed the world. When one knows how to add to the apostolate of editions the apostolate of suffering, then one completes redemption: ‘I complete in my flesh what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, which is the Church’» (*Haec meditare* II 8 1941, p. 50).

«Every toil, associated with the passion of Jesus Christ, becomes an element of individual and social redemption» (To the Pauline Families 1954, p. 51).

## 5. From the Word to Life

Jeremiah suffers intensely and with anguish, the situation of rejection of God experienced by his people. We see that today the problem has not changed much: the world remains obstinate in rejecting God. Like Jeremiah, we have been sent to announce salvation to these people in the 21st century.

Perhaps our concern shifts more to the level of information... Only when we have Jeremiah's concern for his people will we be supportive and feel motivated to do something more, to help, to put all our efforts and passion at the service of the mission, so that it ceases to be a mere ‘occupation’ and becomes almost an ‘obsession’ that unifies our whole life. We begin by asking God to move our hearts and make us share in His passion for the world He loves so much.

Gilead was famous for its healing balms. But Israel did not apply the balm, they did not obey God. Their sickness was very deep, but God could heal their wounds, even if He did not force them to heal. And the people refused the