

Notes from Julián Carrón's homily
at the funeral of his mother, Andrea Pérez
Getafe (Madrid), February 1, 2019

Rm 14:7-9.10C-12 / Psalm 22:1b-3a. 3b-4.5.6 / Jn 17:24-26

You cannot live for one moment without living for something. Each of us knows what we are living for. In all we do, we affirm that for which we are living. Those who have met Christ can no longer live for themselves, nor die for themselves. “For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s” (Rm. 14:8).

This is the experience I always saw in my mother’s life. In her absolute simplicity, she lived determined by the Lord. No special formation or preparation is necessary, simply being touched, as she was touched, by this Grace that enabled her to live in front of all of us with this consciousness that determined her in her innermost depths, much more than she was able to express. In fact, most of the time she was of few words, but lived the ultimate gift of herself, one in which this Presence prevailed, as she said in her last weeks to one of my nieces when she asked her about herself, her life and her relationship with the Lord.

In her we see the victory of Christ. “For this is why Christ died and came to life, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living” (Rm. 14:9), that His Presence might dominate life, that His Presence be the thing that moves us too. For this reason, as we recited in the Psalm, “The Lord is my shepherd: even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me” (Psalm 23:4). This is the certainty that pervades life now, in front of my mother’s body, which has now become cold. Always with her tenderness, always with her certainty, always with her thoughtfulness, with her human warmth. It is strange to give her a last kiss, and feel her completely cold, and at the same time not be determined by that coldness, because everything she lived is what we heard in the Gospel reading: “Father, they are Your gift to Me. I wish that where I am, they also may be with Me” (Jn. 17:24).

Jesus is able to spark this desire in those who know Him. It was not simply Jesus’ desire to have us close, but in those who know Him He is able to kindle the desire to be with Him. My mother wanted nothing more; there was nothing else she desired. “Lord, when will you bring me to You?”. Everything was determined by this desire, which is no longer only Christ’s desire that we live with Him, as if one had to bear the consequences of His desire, but is the desire to be with Him that Jesus is able to evoke in the innermost depths of each of us. For this reason, every time a dear person leaves us, what remains is the regret at not being able to go with her, because, as Saint Paul said, “I long to depart this life and be with Christ, for that is far better” (cf. Phil. 1:23).

Thus, in the midst of the pain of separation, today we are full of this Glory that she is finally contemplating in all its radiance, in all its attraction, in all its capacity to fascinate, that for which we were created and to which we are called. “Father, they are Your gift to Me. I wish that where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may see My glory that You gave Me” (Jn. 17:24).

Today I want to thank the Lord again for this certainty that faith communicates to us through grace. We could not stay in front of such a circumstance with peace, with a certainty like the one that fills us now, if He did not also overcome all our resistance. For this reason, let us ask for this faith for ourselves, so that we who remain, who must still struggle in the midst of the normal difficulties of life, may be determined by this certainty that we see shining out today, and at the same time, may testify to each other that life does not end here, that death is only appearance, a passage, a transit toward that fullness to which we are all called. Praying for her, let us also ask that each of us be granted the grace to live in this way.