



Day 11: Intimacy – The Compassionate Gaze

Jesus, living in the gaze of the Father

“Jesus, looking at him, loved him.” Mark 10: 21

It is written into our human experience to be attracted to someone's gaze. It is first the gaze of our mother and father that secures us in a loving relationship. When someone “looks” at us with eyes of love and delight, we know we have a place in the world. From all eternity, God the Father looked upon His Son Jesus with a perfect gaze of love and delight. Imagine the intimacy! In the gaze of His Father, Jesus knows and experiences the gift of His sonship. He knows that He is eternally and unconditionally loved, known, seen, and constantly chosen and preferred. It is precisely this experience of love and communion that Jesus comes to restore for every son and daughter. All over the Gospels He has concrete encounters with those who have forgotten who they are in the eyes of God. Jesus, gazing upon them, carries in His eyes the eternally and perfect love of the Father. A big part of restoration of sonship is allowing Jesus to look upon us with His gaze of love and mercy. Can you accept the way He personally looks at you and loves you?

Mary, an Icon of the Father’s Gaze

Mary’s vocation as the mother of Jesus was profoundly sacred. With great reverence, we can reflect upon God the Father’s plan of salvation and how, if He was going to send His only Son to become a man to save us from our sins, then He would be very particular about the human family that He was born into. It was the Father’s gift to Jesus to give Him a mother and a father on earth that would constantly reflect the way that the Father has loved Him from all eternity. In the persons of Mary and Joseph, the Father fashioned a dwelling place of divine love. Thus, in Mary’s and Joseph’s gazes, Jesus recognized the gaze of his Father. In the absolute beauty of Mary’s face, her eyes, and her smile, Jesus was constantly reminded of the way that the Father looked at Him with so much love. Mary’s gaze was a living icon of the gaze of the Father. It was in this gaze of love that Jesus was constantly held in the communion of prayer. It is this gaze that Our Lady of Guadalupe promised to us when she said, “I will give Him [Jesus] to the people, He who is my person-love, He who is my compassionate gaze, He who is my help, He who is my salvation.” (*Nican Mopohua*, 28)

St. Juan Diego and Us

You are made for intimacy. In Our Lady's gaze we are drawn into deeper intimacy, not only with Mary, but with God whom she reflects. Our Lady of Guadalupe was sent to Juan Diego as a radiant icon of God's love. The following text captures his experiences as the apparition began: "As Juan Diego ascended the hill and found himself before a beautiful woman adorned in clothing that shone like the sun. She stood upon stones that seemed to send forth beams of light like precious jade and other jewels; the earth seemed to shine with the brilliance of a rainbow." Imagine the wonder and beauty of her presence that shone with the radiance of the sun and the brilliance of a rainbow. Captivated by her beauty, I wonder what it was like for Juan Diego to behold the face of Mary. What were her eyes like? How did her smile make him feel? But Brother, we have her image! You can turn to her image on the Tilma and see her gaze upon you. It is this experience of communion and connection with Mary that will begin to restore your experience of prayer. Juan Diego allowed himself to be captivated by the face of Mary and then he was brought into communion with Jesus who dwells with her. You too can be captivated by Our Lady's face and be drawn into that same communion. What would it look like to let down your guard and to allow yourself to be seen by Our Lady? She is pure, and her purity will wash over you like a flood. This is how Mary desires to restore our prayer with Jesus. In your personal prayer, allow the gaze of Mary to fall upon you. What is she like? And what is your heart like as you rest beneath her gaze?

Prayer

O Jesus, we adore You, we love You, and we thank You for the gift of Your presence. You are the beloved Son of the Father who carries within Your very gaze His sacred love and delight. We long to see Your face and receive Your gaze of love. We ask you now to hear this prayer.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of God and Mother of us, draw us close to your heart. As St. Juan Diego was captivated by your beauty and drawn in by your motherly gaze of love, come and look upon us! We long to behold your beauty and let it teach us about the presence of God. Please come and fill us with Your love.

Amen.

After reading today's reflection, pray the Litany of Restoration of Sonship.