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## TELL ME WHAT YOU DESIRE AND I'LL TELL YOU WHO YOU ARE!

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It is not always easy to express what we carry in our hearts: a successful business, passing grades in school, a sports trophy, seeing one's beloved, winning a fortune, peace in the family, health for a loved one, a dream vacation... the legitimate desires which express the hopes of our contemporaries.

### SIMEON'S DESIRE

Saint Luke the Evangelist tells a beautiful story from the childhood of Jesus, when he was first brought to the Temple in Jerusalem. A just and pious man named Simeon awaited the consolation of Israel: this was his deepest wish and desire. It was revealed to him that he would not experience death until he had seen the Anointed of the Lord. He came to the temple now, inspired by the Spirit, and when Joseph and Mary brought in the child Jesus to perform for him the customary ritual of the Law, he took him in his arms and blessed the Lord in these words: "Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace: you have fulfilled your word. For my eyes have witnessed your saving deed displayed for all the peoples to see a revealing light to the Gentiles, the glory of your people Israel" (Luke 2:25-32). I have great admiration for this man who had a deep desire for God. He wanted to see Him: he awaited Him and recognised Him when He came. How wonderful this is, and with all the believers I cry out, "Deepen in us the desire for God, deepen in us the desire for holiness!"

### A FERVENT DESIRE

There is a story about a disciple who told his master one day: "Master, I want to find God!" The master look at the young man without speaking and simply smiled. The young man returned to the master every day, with the same request of wanting God. However, the master knew better than him what it was that he wanted. One warm day the master asked the young man to follow him to the river: the master wanted to take a refreshing swim. The young man jumped into the water. The master then grabbed him and held him under water. After struggling a bit, the young man was let go and the master asked him what had been his greatest desire while being held under water. "Air," answered the disciple. "Do you desire God as much?" asked the master. "If you so desire him, you shall immediately find him. If you do not have this desire and thirst you can well struggle with all the power of your mind, your words and your strength, still you will not find God. As long as this thirst is not aroused in you, you are no better than an atheist. Besides, the atheist is often very sincere in his conviction, while you are not, in yours!" "Deepen in us the desire for God, deepen in us the desire for holiness!" says the liturgy. Simeon wanted to see the Messiah of God... He saw him, recognised him, and he was henceforth ready to go to him forever.

### DESIRING THE INVISIBLE

Desiring forms part of the person that I am, and in me, desire meets another one which is first: it meets God's desire to have all of humankind share in His joy. Yes, the desire of God is prior to mine. God desires before I do and more than I that I be eternally happy. God wants me to share His life in Jesus, through Jesus and with Jesus. He wishes me to wish for His life! In my relationship with God, I must be aware of my human condition which does not see God and which does not yet know about God. Hoping in and wishing for what I do not see, I await him, and I develop in me the disposition needed to receive God's gift. I must go from my desire to His. I must express what desires possess me, stimulate the deepening of these feelings, and discover in the Gospels the reference points helping me recognise whether my desires coincide with God's. I must pass from my desire to His. I must revive within my thirst for God. "O God, you are my God whom I seek; for you my flesh pines and my soul thirst..." (Psalm 63). This thirst for God, a thirst for the absolute, must be constantly nourished. Like Simeon, we must be searchers for God.

## AN EVER-VALUABLE SECRET

In one of the last section of Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, the fox discloses a secret whose richness, to me, is timeless: "Here is my secret," said the fox, 'it is very simple: One sees well only with the heart. What is essential is invisible to the eyes.' "What is essential is invisible to te eyes,' the little prince repeated, in order to remember. 'It is the time you wasted with your rose that makes your rose so important.' 'It is the time I have wasted for my rose...,' the little prince repeated, in order to remember. The fox said, 'People have forgotten this but you, you must not forget. You remain forever responsible for what you have tamed. You are responsible for your rose...' 'I am responsible for my rose,' the little prince repeated, in order to remember..." What if the same were true about our desire for God... if we could give at least a few minutes every day or every week to this invisible God who is full of love and kindness? If only we could, this year, reach out to what is essential...

## LIFE OF MY LIFE

It is good for us to talk about the desire for God. As a matter of fact, it is our total life that must become desire for God. It is during life that we prepare to meet God face to face, to recognise Him, and to love Him even more. Perhaps the following words of a song I wrote a month before being appointed bishop could be an expression of this desire for God, that our desire for Him be granted!

You are the life of my life,  
the joy of my joy, the heart of my heart.

*O my beloved, you have seduced me,  
and you have prevailed!  
O my beloved, you have led me,  
and I have let myself be led.  
O my beloved, you are mine,  
and your word lies deep in my heart.*

*O my beloved, you live for me  
and your kindness fills my being.  
O my beloved, I live for you,  
my happiness lies in loving you.  
O my beloved, your love for me is from day to day  
your love for me, from year to year.  
O my beloved, I will love you  
in days of happiness and times of sorrow.*

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