

## Down Memory Lane

“How are you?” I asked a friend whom I had not seen for quite some time.  
“Life has been awful for me after the death of my mother!” she replied.  
I had no idea that her mother had died, and so I asked her: “Did she die recently, for I do not remember hearing about her death?” I asked.  
“No,” she replied, “My mother died eight years ago!”

It is evident that for my friend life had stopped eight years ago and that the healing process of mourning had not yet taken place. Of course, we do miss our loved ones when they die, but life has to go on.

It is true that the past is part of our life, but when we get stuck in the past we are doomed to miss the wonderful opportunities of the present. At that point our growth is at risk.

What is true of life in general is also true of our spiritual life. Do you remember the two disciples of Emmaus (Lk24: 13-36)? They were still living in the past convinced of their unshakable concepts of what the Messiah should have been. At the same time they were missing the shattering new reality which had dawned with the Resurrection of Jesus. The Messiah was more alive than ever. The risen Lord was victorious over death and over his enemies much more than his disciples could ever dare to imagine.

There are many such disciples of Jesus today. Some people would like to be living in a pre-Vatican II Church. Others would like to be in a society of the “good old times”, while forgetting that no period of history was ever free from catastrophes, problems and dark shadows.

So in order to allow ourselves to grow healthily spiritually, psychologically and physically, it is good to live in the present. It is only in the present moment that we can meet others and God himself. Let the dead bury the dead, Jesus said. We do well when we give thanks to God and others for past benefits and happy experiences. These memories will fill our lives with warmth, gratitude and love. Happy memories can boost our morale in difficult times. We lay in God's hands our past sins, failures and tragedies. If we trust in God he can still draw good things for us and for others also from these bad experiences. But there is no point in letting our heart become overburdened with guilt feelings. Let us rejoice that we now can turn to our God and offer him all our good wishes, thoughts and deeds.

As believers in the risen Lord we live in the present moment. Jesus is always with us because he himself has promised us so.

### Reflection and Prayer

- Let me think of pleasant past events in my life. Let me recall and relive these events in the Lord's presence.
- In the same way, let me recall the hurtful or unpleasant experiences in my life. Let me do so in the Lord's presence while asking for his healing.
- Having put my past in the Lord's hands let me eagerly look forward to the blessings that the Lord wants to shower on me now and in the future.

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