TOGETHER pilgrims on the way towards MADRID 2011 Spiritual journey in the company of CA young saints

Fourth stage (August – September 2010)

TIME TO MEDITATE

Luke 15,1-32 • WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR INCARNATION; YOU ARE THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD, BUT YOU HAVE NOT HESITATED TO COME DOWN AND BECOME MAN

"The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them he addressed this parable.

"What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance. "Or what woman having ten coins and losing one would not light a lamp and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it? And when she does find it, she calls together her friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost.' In just the

same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Then he said, "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers." So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began.

Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found."

It is quite an unusual experience to know that you are being searched for to be pardoned. Usually, we prefer to look for others to pardon them. In fact this experience could be hard for us but it makes us feel good and contented. When one finds himself in a position when he has nothing but his mistakes to show, he feels totally lost and greatly humiliated and indebted. The two brothers in this parable are very good examples of this.

Here, Jesus speaks of Himself and of the Father. He wishes to tell us with what perseverance and gentleness He keeps searching for us to forgive us. And when Jesus insists upon something, what He means is generally not so easy and obvious for us. We can only experience the joy of being pardoned if we are able to face reality ("How many hired workers ..."), decide to take action and ask for pardon from those we have offended. And this is not easy.

But we have just said that Jesus is speaking of Himself. He always does first what he expects from us. Even though there was no need, He, who does not need any pardon, wanted to "get up" from His state of glory and love in communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit to come to us in the Incarnation. By doing so, He has shown us that He knows exactly what He is asking from us. He is ready to accept humiliation and this has to be the true way of salvation, in Him and through Him, in us.



BLESSÈD ANTONIA MESINA

Biography

Antonia Mesina was born in Orgosolo, in the province of Nuoro. She was the second among ten children. From 1929 to 1931, she was a beniamina (member of the Children's group) of the *Gioventù Femminile di Azione Cattolica* (the Catholic Action Female Youth Sector) and in 1934 she became an effective member.

She was a reserved and determined person and spontaneously participated in the initiatives promoted by the Venerable Armida Barelli, foundress of the *Gioventù Femminile* at Orgosolo. Besides being a member of the ICA, she was also a member of the Figlie di Maria (Daughters of Mary) and of the Franciscan Third Order. After the canonization of Saint Maria Goretti, having read her life, she declared that in similar circumstances she would have done the same.

On the morning of the 17th May 1935, after having been to mass in her parish church, together with a neighbour Annedda Castangia, she went to the countryside to search for logs. While the two young girls were tying the logs in bundles, Antonia was attacked by Ignazio Catgiu, a young fellow countryman, who dragged her among the bushes and tried to rape her. When he did not succeed in doing what he had planned, Catgiu stoned her to death. Antonia Mesina was sixteen years old when she was murdered. The funeral was held on the 19th May and was attended by all the inhabitants of Orgosolo.

She was beatified on the 4th October 1987 together with Marcel Callo and Pierina Morosini.

Some comments about Antonia

From the canonical process for the beatification

One of her teachers, Miss Francesca Funedda said: "She was a normal child, very active, generous and always ready to help. She was lively but obedient. She received her first moral and religious education from her family. Then, during her elementary course, I took an interest in her education... She got along well with everybody and never came to school unprepared. She was respectful towards everybody: her parents, her teachers and her schoolmates".

Her mother said: "I do not remember ever having to scold her, nor her father. She was more of an angel when it came to modesty and obedience. She liked silence, was very reserved and had an outstanding spirit of sacrifice. [...] I noted a change for the better when she started attending Catholic Action meetings. To be able to go and receive Communion she left her little brothers in the care of her neighbour".

Her brother Giulio said: "Many times I found her kneeling in her room with the rosary beads in her hands".

The Pope said

«Rejoice with me all of you from the diocese of Nuoro, citizens of Orgosolo and of the whole of Sardegna, on the occasion of the beatification of the young Antonia Mesina.

Her martyrdom is definitely the climax of a humble and joyful dedication towards her numerous family. Her constant 'yes' in the hidden service given at home prepared her to say the decisive 'yes'. [...]

On that memorable day of May 1935, the bundle of wood, gathered to make bread in the home oven, remained on the mountain near her body, slain by the many stones thrown at her.

On that day, another fire, which prepares another type of bread for a much larger family, was lit». John Paul II, *Homily for the beatification mass*, 4 October 1987