



The unavoidable experience of the darkness in our life. In the life's road we may live moments of big darkness, without solution, with terrible troubles, sorrow and suffering. Those moments make us doubt about the God's goodness and existence. Darkness is part of our life, because we are in a continuous way to the encounter with Christ, who is the light (Cf. John 8, 12). This search of the definitive light brings with itself the unavoidable experience of the darkness. This will happen until we get to the full possession of the light that will be made in the eternity.

However, if the darkness invades our life, we must discover how to pray on those cases. We must learn to encourage ourselves in order to find in God the light for our darkness. If we want to pray in the darkness, we must do a reflection to comprehend the origin of our current situation of darkness. There are some possible causes about these moments of distance of the light. Depending of the cause, it will be the way God will answer us.

Kinds of darkness.

The first darkness is voluntary, when we do not accept to let Him enlighten us by the light of Christ. This is caused by the distance of God, because of the sin or spiritual decline. The solution is the going back to the Father, what you must do is to have an encounter with the Father's Mercy using the prayer of abandonment.

A second darkness is when we do not know where to walk. I mean, adverse situations which everything goes bad, make a decision or simply we do not know where to walk. This darkness receives the light of the Holy Spirit that enlightens and guides us. He is the Light our intelligence and our heart need to know what decision to make and also to have the enough force to do it.

A third darkness occurs when we are suffering and feeling that there is not a solution to our problem. A deep hole where we do not know how, when or why to escape. This is known as the darkness on the cross. **Finally, the darkness when we do not experience the presence of God.** When we feel that God does not reveal, we tend to think that God has abandoned us. The same shout that Jesus did to his Father on the cross: “My God, my God, why have You Forsaken Me?” (Matt 27, 46). Later we will tell you more about how to face these two kinds of darkness.

Darkness in the cross

We, the Christians, are used to see the sign of the cross of Christ in difficult situations. In other words, to be experiencing periods, moments or circumstances of cross. It has a direct mention of Jesus Christ. When we talk on this way about darkness, we understand that we experience it with Christ. So, we can say that we suffer with Him. The prophet Isaiah tells us that “Surely He took up our pain” (Is 53, 4). This means that He accepted to say yes to all the suffering of the humanity.

The cross enlightened by the paschal mystery

When Jesus became incarnate, He accepted experiencing everything the human being lives. He chose to suffer, in his flesh, what we suffer. However, he did it with a simple purpose. Christ brought all suffering to the death, making it occasion of redemption. Giving life in the death (cf. Eph 2, 5- 6) He emptied the suffering from its negative sense of pain to fill from a redeeming sense. In this way, He defeated the dark and filled with the light of His saving and redeeming. This is the light of the love. And for love, Jesus Christ went in depth into the darkness and from it, He became the light of the world in order not to walk in the dark, but to have the light of the life (cf. 1John 1, 5- 7). In this way, the darkness is enlightened by the paschal mystery. **The Death and Resurrection of the Lord let us throw some light to some moments of cross in our lives, because the real life is first death, the real light is first darkness.**

The gifts of the cross

When we learn to live the moments of cross, letting them enlighten by the paschal mystery, we can see that our interior is enriched by that sorrowful experience. Once lived the suffering with Christ, we can see in our interior some gifts that God grants us. The first one is the gift of intimacy. The cross is not empty, Jesus is on it. So, we embrace to the cross of Christ. This is the best console and rest. We do not suffer alone, Christ

suffers with us. He has held our hand, then come into our sorrow and has enlightened from inside. Darkness receives the light of Christ, the light of His presence. His intimate presence makes light the loads. The load and the cross are light because there are other shoulders that take it with us.

Plus, if we live this suffering, God grants us the gift of maturity. A fruit of growing that brings by itself the sorrow. As the gospel says, when our grain of wheat dies, it produces much fruit (cf. John 12, 24). The most beautiful is that the suffering and the sorrow joined to the Christ of the cross produces fruit of redemption. In consequence, darkness occasions that look stealing our happiness, will have sense and will be lighter. Saint Paul says it on this way: “all things God works for the good of those who love Him” (Rom 8, 28). Finally, the darkness of the cross, enlightened by the paschal mystery, develops more in ourselves the ability to love. Suffering awakes in humans the ability to love. It is tested our love and we learn how to love. When we suffer with Christ, so we grow up, love more and fill of intimacy. This is the light that has moments of darkness on the cross.

The assumed abandoning of God

We have already explained how the moments of the darkness on the cross may be enlightened by the paschal mystery. Now, let see how God may be present in those moments which we think we have been abandoned by Him. **This happens when we do not experience significantly the presence of God. Moments in which it looks that God is not here and we feel that He has “abandoned us”.**

When we do not feel significantly the presence of God, it is time to make grow our friendship, let it matures. It is a time we normally call of desert (cf. Josh 5, 6). It is similar to the experience of the People of Israel before they get inside the Promised Land. It is a period where there is not water to quench our thirst of God, and little food to feed our sensitivity, also in the daytime it is hot and at night it is cold. Our friendship with God is invaded by a silence similar to that time in the desert.

The prayer in the darkness will have as fruit a growth. One step in the faith. Even though we cannot feel Him, see Him or He does not show to us very clearly, believe that He is really present. The sensitive experience that God sometimes gives us in the prayer is a short description of who is Him. **Actually, God is much more than that. So that God asks us to develop our faith about His presence and His love will be stronger and more real.** Our faith is supported by God and the experience of Him by His attributes. Our certainty of faith is kept every time; our sensitive part is only in a specific moment.

The mysterious presence of God in the darkness

When we often pray in the darkness and without collapse (cf. Luke 18, 1) we begin finding the mysterious presence of God in the darkness. The word mysterious does not mean weird or unreachable, but means that the action of God does not always match with our way of act. He prefers simplicity, smallness and darkness. In this way, we are face to face with the true and real presence of God. In that moment, it does not matter if we feel it or not, but we are living, rather totally secure that God is always loving us and pouring out his gifts upon us. The one, who has experienced this, totally forgets about the environment in order to focus on finding Him in the darkness. Therefore, God begins to enlighten our soul from inside. It begins to fill our soul from Himself, because He lives on it and from there He strengthens, moves, guides and loves it.

So that, the prayer in the darkness is an intimacy encounter with God that fills everything. A simple encounter that makes that everything obstructs the connection between the soul and God in the silence. It is an uninterrupted dialogue that makes us to pray without stopping. It is, rather living in the presence of God; under His gaze.

All the occasions of darkness and sorrow are never easy. That is why God always interferes with more force in order to show Himself with His presence of love to humans. The Lord fills darkness with His light. By one hand, in the moments of cross, He enlightens our road with His light from the paschal mystery. And by the other hand, in the moments of spiritual insensitivity and experience of abandoning of God, our prayer is enlightened by the mysterious presence of God in the darkness. In order to live those moments, we can use this prayer:

“My God, in the deepest darkness of my soul I look for you, God. The desert has invaded my heart and I meet and need your presence. Dark does not let me see you and touch you. Grant me the faith to believe that you enlighten with your light my darkness. Your presence in the faith fills of sense my life and what I am. I do not want to leave this darkness to go to the light of the world because I prefer the darkness which is filled by your mysterious light that comes from the intimacy. You are my light, Lord, I do not want other.

Amen.”

(Translation from Spanish by Gustavo Mendez Alejandro)

