

27. January 2020

“The conversion of Roy Schoeman”

Part 2

In yesterday's meditation, Roy told us about the decisive experience of his life, when, in a moment of profound anguish and without finding the meaning of existence, God granted him a supernatural grace. It was the light of the Lord which illuminated him and gave him now inner certainty about the great questions of faith. Let us remember that, in that light, Roy recognized the most loving God, who, in His goodness, had accompanied him throughout his life; he understood the value or worthlessness of every action; he knew with certainty that eternal life exists.

But he did not yet know the name of this God who had revealed himself to him, and the Lord did not make it known to him at that time either, because he had foreseen it in another way... From that experience, Roy would ask Him every night to show him the way to follow.

We also heard the rejection he showed towards Christianity, certainly also influenced by his Jewish past, but the Lord knows how to guide His own! Now we want to hear how his way continues:

One year after this experience -I know it was exactly a year later, because I made a prayer of thanksgiving for this experience- I went to sleep.

I thought I was awoken by a hand on my shoulder and led to a room where I was left alone with the most beautiful young woman I could imagine. I know today that my body was still sleeping in bed, but at that time I felt completely awoken. My memory describes it like this:

When I found myself in her presence, I knew, without being told, that it was the Blessed Virgin Mary. All I wanted was to fall on my knees and honor her somehow. To be in her presence, to feel the purity and intensity of the love which flow from her, brought me to a state of ecstasy that I had never experienced before.

As beautiful she was to look, it was even more beautiful the sound of her voice. It is very difficult to describe, but her voice was made out of what music makes music, even if she was not singing. It just flowed through me carrying with it that love, and lifted me up into this state of ecstasy.

The first thought coming in my mind was that I wanted to honor her somehow. I thought: „O, my goodness, I wish I could at least say a Hail Mary!“ But I could not!

Her first word to me was an offering to answer some questions, if I had some to her.

At first I wanted to ask her to teach me the Hail Mary, but I was too proud to let her know that I did not know it.

So instead I asked what her favourite prayer to her was.

Her first answer was that she loved all prayers to her. But I was a little bit pushy and said she must love some more than others. So she relented and recited a prayer, but it was in Portuguese and I did not know any Portuguese. So all what I could do, was to make the effort to remember the first words phonetically. The next morning when I woke up, I wrote them down according to what I had memorized... Later, when I met a Portuguese Catholic woman, I asked her to recite all the prayers to Mary in Portuguese, so that I could identify this precise one. Making every effort, I identified the prayer as the following: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee".

I asked her about four or five other questions; most of them were out of the same desire to honor her. I mention one or two from them now.

At one point, overwhelmed again by her presence, I simply stammered:

„How can it be that you are so exalted, so magnificent, so glorious?“

She looked down to me almost with pity, shook her head gently and said:

"Oh no, you do not understand, you don't understand anything: I am nothing, I am a creature, I am a created thing, He is everything!"

Then, again out of the desire to honor her somehow, I asked her, what title she loved best for herself. Her response was:

"I am the beloved Daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son and Spouse of the Holy Spirit."

After I finished asking her all my questions, which she answered graciously, she said that she had something to tell me.

So she spoke to me for about 15 more minutes, but there is a veil over that part of the experience and I don' t have the kind of word for word-memory.

Then the audience was over and I went back to sleep.

When I woke up the next morning, I was hopelessly in love with the Virgin Mary. I now knew that the God who had manifested Himself to me in my first encounter had been Christ, and I wanted nothing other than to be as fully and completely a Christian as possible.

I did not yet know the difference between Protestants and Catholics; I had never even opened the New Testament. I had stayed ignorant of Christianity. So all I could do was open a local phone book and find a church I could go to, but that one was a Protestant Church. As soon as I knew the pastor a bit, I asked him about the Blessed Virgin Mary. When he answered without the respect which I knew she deserved, I knew, this is no place for me.

So, without too many detours, I found my way to the Catholic Church, because I knew who the Blessed Virgin Mary was.

That is really the story.

We will all have been moved by the story of Roy Schoeman's conversion from being an atheist to an apostle of our times, who wants to bring people to faith in Christ. Especially the Jews are dear to his heart, as we have already mentioned at the beginning.

There are many aspects of this story that deserve to be deepened... So tomorrow we will reflect a little more on what we have heard!