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July. - Sept., 2026, No. - 14



Shepherd's Message

Who Shall Climb the Mountain of the Lord?



"Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart." (Psalm 24:3-4)

The question of the Psalmist is an invitation to examine our lives: Who can come into the presence of the

Lord? Who can remain close to Him? The answer is clear: the one who has clean hands and a pure heart. To climb the mountain of the Lord is to undertake the journey of holiness—to allow ourselves to be transformed and conformed to Christ (cf. Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18).

*The Church reminds us that holiness is not reserved for a chosen few. The Second Vatican Council, in Lumen Gentium, speaks of the **universal call to holiness**. Every Christian, whatever his or her state in life, is called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity (LG, 39–40). Christ Himself is the "divine Teacher and Model of all perfection," and His disciples are called to follow Him and conform themselves to His image (LG, 40–41).*

1. Remaining Close to the Lord Has a Cost

*We often desire the consolation of being close to God, but we may not always be ready to pay the price of discipleship. **Closeness to Christ***

demands a change of life. It demands that we leave behind attitudes, habits, attachments and choices that are incompatible with the Gospel. Jesus Himself makes the cost of discipleship clear: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Lk 9:23; cf. Mt 16:24).

*Following Christ therefore cannot remain merely an emotional experience or a devotional practice. It is a decision to allow Christ to shape the whole of our life. **The closer we come to Him, the more we must become like Him** (cf. LG, 40–41; Rom 8:29).*

This is why the image of the mountain is so appropriate. A mountain is not climbed without effort. It requires perseverance, discipline, sacrifice and determination. There are steep paths, moments of tiredness and occasions when one may be tempted to turn back. The spiritual journey is no different. Scripture encourages us to "run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus" (Heb 12:1–2).

2. We Must Model Our Lives on Christ

*The Christian vocation is fundamentally a vocation to **become like Christ**. Lumen Gentium presents Jesus as the divine Teacher and Model of perfection and calls His disciples to follow Him in love (LG, 40–41).*

*We therefore need to ask ourselves: **What does it mean for me to become like Christ?***

It means learning from His humility, His compassion, His obedience to the Father, His forgiveness, His patience, His concern for the poor and suffering, His readiness to serve and, above all, His willingness to love even when love demanded sacrifice (cf. Phil 2:5–8; Mk 10:45; Jn 13:34–35).

3. The Word of God Shows Us the Way

But how can we know Christ sufficiently to imitate Him?

*The answer is found in the **Word of God**.*

The Second Vatican Council's Dei Verbum teaches that God, in His revelation, speaks to human beings as friends and invites them into communion with Himself (DV, 2). Sacred Scripture is therefore not simply a collection of ancient religious writings. It is the living Word through which God continues to speak to His people.

Verbum Domini similarly emphasizes that Christianity is not simply a religion of a book but an encounter with a Person, Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh (VD, 11–12). The Word of God calls us to conversion and becomes fruitful when it is welcomed and lived (VD, 91).

*If we want to know the mind and heart of Christ, **we must spend time with His Word**. We must read it prayerfully, meditate upon it and allow it to question our attitudes and choices (cf. DV, 25; VD, 86–87).*

Jesus Himself says: “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it” (Lk 11:28). St. James puts it even more directly: “Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers” (Jas 1:22).

4. A Firm Resolve: “Come What May, I Will Remain on the Lord's Side”

There comes a point in every genuine journey of faith when we must make a personal decision.

There will be moments when following Christ is unpopular. There will be occasions when truth costs us something. There will be situations in which forgiveness is difficult, generosity is inconvenient, honesty is costly and faithfulness demands sacrifice.

*At such moments, we need more than good intentions. We need a **firm resolve**:*

“Come what may, I will remain on the Lord's side.”

This is the spirit of Christian perseverance. Joshua expressed a similar determination before the people of Israel: “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (Jos 24:15).

5. The Grace of God and Our Response

At the same time, we must never imagine that holiness is something we accomplish by our own strength. The Church teaches that God is the One who sanctifies us. The Holy Spirit works within us and enables us to become more like Christ (cf. LG, 40; Rom 5:5).

Our effort is a response to God's grace, not a substitute for it. As St. Paul reminds us, “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor 15:10).

*St. John Paul II, in Novo Millennio Ineunte, speaks of the “**primacy of grace**”, reminding us that without Christ we can accomplish nothing of lasting spiritual value (NMI, 38; cf. Jn 15:5).*

6. The Mountain Is Climbed One Step at a Time

The mountain of the Lord is not climbed in a single day. We climb it every time we choose forgiveness instead of resentment, truth instead of falsehood, service instead of self-interest, humility instead of pride, generosity instead of selfishness, and faithfulness instead of compromise.

*The goal is not simply to become “better people.” The goal is much greater: **to become more like Christ** (cf. Rom 8:29; Phil 3:12–14).*

Conclusion

The invitation of Psalm 24 remains before each one of us:

“Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?”

May we have the courage to begin the climb, the humility to accept God's grace, the discipline to remain faithful to His Word, and the perseverance to continue even when the road becomes difficult.

And may our daily prayer be:

Lord, purify my heart, cleanse my hands, strengthen my resolve, and make me more like You. Whatever the cost, whatever the difficulty, whatever the circumstances—may I remain faithful to You.

Come what may, I will remain on the Lord's side.

*God Bless You all!
+ Sebastian Kallupura*