

# TIME AND LIFE

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IN ADELE'S WORDS – Nº 1

Clotilde Fernández del Pozo, FMI  
General Assistant

## “There is no time to be lost” (46.4)



CANAL DE GARONNE  
(AGEN)

“There is no time to be lost”, said Adele at the end of July 1806. Today, we Marianist Sisters, in all the countries where our Congregation has

spread, also live with the experience that we lack enough time. But it is necessary to understand why Adele needed more time, and to revise our approach to the hurried pace, stress and sense of urgency that sometimes prevent us from living in the moment and paying attention to what is truly most important.

Adele lived with a clear awareness that life could end at any moment. Today, our average life-span is over double the years that she lived. She spent time hand-writing letters and patiently waited for the response of her addressee. We live

in the digital era. With the ease of *Copy and Paste*; we send instant messages and get nervous and impatient when we do not receive a quick answer.

The society of our 21st century has an understanding of time and life’s meaning that is very different from Adele’s 19th century. Let us draw on Adele’s wisdom to help us become more conscious of what occupies our time, and let’s try to fill our moments with what brings meaning to our Marianist life. “There is no time to be lost” can have a completely opposite sense. It can lead us to live with a

happy outlook or it can drag us into an over-activism that fails to serve our vocational call. We may find that our ability to be active can be limited because of health challenges or aging. If so, what do we do with our time?

Adele’s life gives us clues for all stages, no matter how old we are. The essential always remains.

For this reflection we will use the words of Pope Francis, the letters of Adele and the Gospel.



## Homily of Pope Francis (Saint Martha, 26/11/2013)

“A Christian is a man or woman who knows how to live in the moment and also knows how to live in time. The moment is what we have in hand right now, but this is not time, the moment passes! Perhaps we might feel that we are masters of the moment, but it is a trap to believe that we are masters of time. Time is not our own. Time belongs to God! The moment is in our hands and we are free to

choose how to grasp it. We may be masters of the moment, but there is only one Sovereign over time: Jesus Christ.”

The Christian, which is a man or a woman of the moment, must have these two virtues, these two attitudes in order to live in the moment: prayer and discernment. To recognize the true signs, to know the way we must go to fully live this moment, requires the gift of discernment

and prayer. However, to look at time, whose owner is only the Lord, Jesus Christ, is beyond any human virtue. The virtue for looking at time must be given to us as a gift from the Lord: It is hope! Prayer and discernment for the moment, and hope for time. In this way, the Christian is able to move on this road, moment by moment, with prayer and discernment, but leaves time to hope.

Christians spend every moment waiting for the Lord but they hope in the Lord until the end of time. Men and women of the moment and of time, of prayer, discernment and hope. May the Lord grant us the grace to walk with wisdom. This, too, is a gift: that wisdom which, in the moment, leads us to pray and discern and which, in time, is God’s messenger that helps us to live with hope.



**“WHAT A HOST  
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ADELE DE BATZ

My dear friend, let us look upon the year we are about to begin as the last one of our lives—which, in fact, it may very well be. Let us make strong resolutions to spend it in a more holy fashion than we have the preceding ones. God is giving us a new grace, for he is giving us a little more time, something which he withholds from so many others. (29.3)

How time flies, my dear and good friend! What a host of reflections the quick passing of time can lead us to make!

Our hearts are his creation, and we must not refuse them to him. Let us consecrate them to him for time and for eternity so that, after we have loved him during our lifetime, this love might lead us to the celestial dwelling of our Well-Beloved. (72.7)

We must hurry, for time is short and moments are pre-

*In Adele’s words*

Just this thought, “Nothing is stopping me; I am ready to go when it shall please God to call me,” is for the soul the sweetest consolation and a source of true happiness. My dear friend, let us try to imitate St. Paul and use the world as if we used it not. That is, let us live as if we lived not; let us live without loving life and all the goods of this life. Let us live for God and in God so as to live eternally in glory with God. (43.2.5)

Let us omit nothing, my good friend, that could make us

advance in virtue. Let us spur each other on in holy emulation. I suggest that on Sunday we reflect in general on how we have spent the week. If we have made some progress, let us bless the Lord and give him all the glory. If we have fallen back, or even if we have only maintained our status quo, let us lament before God and take new resolutions. We must seek the means to correct ourselves as soon as possible, for there is no time to be lost. Time passes, and eternity approaches. (46.4)

cious. We may be nearing the end of our life span, and our hands are still empty of good works. (75.3)

We must be like travelers, just passing through and not setting our hopes on this world, (...) Let us not seek our rest in this world, for it is not here. This is a time of work, of trials, and of struggle. The

era of peace and rest will come in due time. Let us only try to deserve to share in it. (94.6.7)

Here we are, my dear friend, already at midyear. How rapidly time flies. Alas! What have we gained in God’s sight during this time? May the next six months be better occupied! (108.5)

Let us be miserly with the little time that may be left to us. Courage, my friend, let us bestir ourselves. Who does not advance, falls back. Let us therefore continue our efforts to increase in the love of our good Master. (122.5)

Pray for me so that this time of bodily rest might benefit my soul. (379.4)

My dear friend, we must reserve the second Friday of the

month for ourselves. Prepare everything in advance, so that on the day itself you need to give time only to the meeting. Father Chaminade intimates that we must not devote ourselves to others at our own expense. On that day, suspend all occupations which are not absolutely necessary. On that particular Friday, each of us will write the monthly account of the state

of our souls. We must always be concerned with our own well-being. (409.4-5)

Administration is more difficult, and our exterior works are ever more time-consuming. Pray to the good Lord that I might find time for everything without forgetting myself. (420.3)

All three meals together take me fifteen minutes. You see how I save time! (711.6)

## *The Word of God tells us...*

*(Mt 16, 21-28)*

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are set-

ting your mind not on divine things but on human things." Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?"

"For the Son of Man is to

come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."



**"I AM THE WAY  
AND  
THE TRUTH  
AND  
THE LIFE"**

*(Jn, 14, 1-6. 14-17)*

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.

Where (I) am going you know the way". Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it. "If you

love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you".

*(Ephesians 5: 15-17)*

Watch carefully then how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise, making the most of the opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not continue in ignorance, but try to understand what is the will of the Lord.

All (people) complain that they haven't enough time. They look at their lives from too human a point of view. There is always time to do what God wants us to do, but we must put ourselves completely into each moment that (God) offers us.

(Michel Quoist, *Prayers*)



## SUGGESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRAYER

**Personally:** Slowly read the texts of Pope Francis, Mother Adele and the Scriptures trying to find common aspects.

- “The moment is what we have in hand right now, but this is not time”. (*Pope Francis*) How am I aware of this statement? What is my experience of the current moment?
- In the present moment, what place does prayer, discernment and hope have in my life?
- What do Mother Adele's words mean for me as applied to my life at this time? What wisdom and advice does she have for me? For my community?
- Does the external environment that surrounds our community – be it far or near – have the meaning that we want to give to time and life? How is it affecting us?

**In Community:** Dedicate some time to share personal reflections. End with a moment of prayer or *lectio divina* with one of the Scripture texts.

### *Closing Prayer:*

Mary, poor and simple woman.  
Listening attentively and welcoming God's gift.  
Your life was full of wonder, not fully understanding,  
Yet open to do what was asked, in awe before God.  
You silently treasured all that happened  
Contemplating and pondering in your heart.  
From your fecund interior, burst forth praise,  
gratitude, trust, availability and readiness,  
and total abandonment to God.  
In silent solidarity before the cross  
you committed yourself with the New Humanity until the end.  
Pray for us, Mother,  
in this hour of the Church  
on pilgrimage to the home of the Trinity. Amen

