



On this fourth day of the novena, we will reflect on the figure of Sara, daughter of Raguel.

The history of Sara looks like a fairy tale. A young woman, the only daughter of her father, had seven husbands, and each one of them died during wedding night, before even approaching her. It was a demon who was killing them, as if someone would have bewitched the young and beautiful woman. Until Tobiah arrived, the true “prince charming” accompanied by the angel Raphael, his fairy Godmother, who have undone the charm and they lived happily ever after...



It could be like this. The truth is that the story of Sara, that goes parallel to the story of Tobit, have enough things in common with the story of another biblical man: Job. The evils that fall on these three persons are not their fault. The three of them fear God, fulfil all commands, take care of the poor. But even so their fidelity is put into test through different disgraces. The three of them are insulted by their family members, servant, friends, that why do they still trust in God if all the good they have done is repaid with suffering. Until such a point that they raise their prayer to God asking for death. Tobit and Sara pray at the same time, and God hears their prayer, and sends his angel to help them through Tobiah. Truly, “where two or three ask together, God is there in their midst”.

I am Sara, daughter of Raguel and of the eternal God. Beautiful Sara, they were unworthy of you [...] You seek Sara, you desire the Daughter of God, the holy Church: MR 9, 32.34. -

Among the female images used by Francisco Palau represent the Church, the person of Sara speaks about the dark night of the Church. This night is much more painful and full of fear because it is provoked by actuation of those who for the reason of their priestly ordination or consecration should be the most devoted to Her. Sarah brings certain newness: it is not that the Church only offers salvation, but she also needs it herself. It is all about infidelity and betrayal of priests, of all those consecrated to the Church who don't serve but use Her for their own personal interests. This is one of the sins in the Church, the dark face that Palau experienced, and that can be still experienced nowadays. It is the “multitude of false lover (...) who

search in the Church not for the Church but for benefits... Some love dignity and glory that surrounds me; others material richness; others laziness and their own comfort; and with these intensions they began career and obtained their glorious situation” (MR 18,6).

The person of Sara reminds us about the topic at the background of whole Bible: “Listen, oh Israel, the Lord in our God, the Lord alone. You shall love God with whole your heart...” She reminds us that God is the jealous God who doesn't allow that his flock will be shepherd for those who are not true shepherds, but only paid workers rented for concrete price. In some way, it may invite us to question our own motivations. What am I looking for, in this moment of my life, in religious life? Do I look for serving the Church, God and neighbor, or do I look for my own glory, position, security, a more comfortable state of life...? The history of Sara shows us clearly that the consecrated who look for their own interests make simple people suffer. It is people who suffer the consequences of our attitudes. It is concrete person who lives close to us who may feel scandalized, betrayed by our lack of love and communion. But let us remember that God doesn't allow his little ones to suffer; he can bring even death to those who have bad intentions in their consecration, even to whole congregation... That's why we need women like Sara who will remind us about the preferential love of God for the little and persecuted ones. May she help us recognize our own interests in serving the Church, may she make us aware of the harm that also we do to the body of Christ.





To finish this reflection, I invite you to put yourself in front of God with all possible sincerity, to recognize times when your intentions in consecration were not pure, and to ask pardon to the Church, to God and your brethren. And that once more you renew your commitment, your consecration, embracing the Church in faith, hope, and true charity. You can do it together with Francisco Palau because he also has a similar experience.

“- Do you want to know the reason of my pain?”

- *If it's possible...*
- *I will bring you to the peak of the mountain where you will see the multitude of false lovers who approaching consecration with bad intentions are in power of Asmodeus. They look in the Church not for the Church, not for me, but for benefits; they married with me through the bonds of consecration, and they love not me but the benefits; this is their beloved things (...)* All these persons don't know me, nor I know them, nor they love me (...) Dead for me, they live for them alone, for the worlds and for the devil.
- *I am scared in your presence.*
- *Why? Do not be afraid.*
- *Who can be worthy of you?*
- *The one who knows and loves me: this is the one who serves me, this is my spouse; in faith, hope, and love I unite myself with a mortal one. The consecrated person who before the world is united with me through the bonds of consecration, if it's not in faith, hope, and true charity, is an unfaithful one.*
- *What will happen to me? I am not worthy of you.*
- *You have your miseries, as any human being; you are bond with me through the bonds of consecration, and in your consecration, you have looked for me alone; you have looked for me because you loved me, and your intention was pure, and this purity made you worthy of me” (Cf. MR 18,5-6).*
- *I, Sister NN, desiring to live fully in communion with you, Church, God and neighbor, give myself to you in faith, hope and love. Under the protection of Mary, Virgin and Spouse, perfect type of the Church, before the assembly of brothers and sisters, I renew my vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, according to our Constitutions. I unite myself once again to this family of Teresian Carmelite Missionaries, to live communion in fraternity, to contemplate and to serve you in your Mystical Body and thus proclaim to all peoples that you are infinitely beautiful and loveable. From now on I am your heritage and property, Holy Church. I am no longer my own, nor do I belong to myself, and with the grace of the Holy Spirit I promise to live in fidelity to you (D 6).*

Let us ask for the grace that we desire through the intercession of Bto. Francisco Palau

Almighty and merciful God and Father, we thank and bless you for instilling
in the heart of Blessed Francisco Palau a singular love for the
Church, the mystical Body of Christ, by revealing to him her
beauty as illustrated in Mary, and inspiring him
to serve her through prayer and apostolic activity.

Grant us his prompt canonization in the Church and the special grace we are asking
through his intercession. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

