



**On this last day of the novena, we will reflect on the figure of the Bride of the Lamb**

The last biblical feminine image that appears in the Writings of Francisco Palau is the Bride of the Lamb that we find in the Book of Revelation. In this image we can see mixed two ways of seeing and understanding the Church: as a woman and as a city. This is the glorious manifestation of the Church at the end of times; because of this, it is an excellent image of what the Church is in its most intimate nature, and what it should be already here on earth. It is “the new heaven and earth”. The Church comes from above, “from the place together with God”, robed in its all splendor, prepared for its Groom. She is already “the place where God dwells with his people” because her spouse is Emmanuel, God-with-us. There are no more tears, nor death, nor tiredness. All the things are new.



This image of the end of times reminds us to the beginning, to the moment of creation. In that first time, everything was new. That first woman, Eve, was created in equal dignity to her spouse, to be his companion, “flesh of his flesh and bones of his bones”. God was with them in the garden of Eden, that was the place where God dwelt with his people. There was no pain nor death, nor tears nor tiredness. Until everything collapsed “because of the envy of the Enemy”, who at the end of times will be won over and won’t have any power.

*She rose on her throne standing, clothed in glory,  
power and beauty, the Woman of the Lamb: MR 11, 27. -*

In the Writings of Francisco Palau, the image of the Bride of the Lamb symbolizes the persecuted Church, living in the midst of difficulties, but at the same triumphant, because as the body of the Lamb she participates in his paschal victory. Palau relates it with his experience of the real historic Church: this experience is not limited only to the moments of the spiritual presence of the Beloved in times of solitude and contemplation. The real and living Church lives inserted among the people and their history. Biblical descriptions are not “dead letter”: they are becoming reality in today of every nation. At the same time, faith in the truth contained in the Bible awakens in Palau trust that the future of the Church is in the hands of God and that it happens in some mysterious way in the Church of today through collaboration of the faithful in struggle and in victory.

The curious thing is that “the Bride of the Lamb” is not only a representation of the Church in the world, a symbol, an image similar to all other biblical women. Even Mary, “the perfect and furnished image”, is no more than the image. The woman of Revelation IS the Church, not her image. She is the community of the believers, what becomes even more clear through the use of the next image, the image of the city of God, the new Jerusalem, that is the same reality represented by the Bride of the Lamb. “I am not an individual, I am the kingdom of God, the holy Jerusalem; I have a head, members, and relations

among themselves and with the head, I have a spirit and soul which gives me life; in fact, I am a moral reality” (MR 5,4).

The Bride of the Lamb appears robed “in the white and shining linens – linen is the good actions of the saints” (Rev 19,8), of those who “have won through the Blood of the Lamb and the testimony they gave by the word and by the deed, because they despised their life before the death” (Rec 12,11). For Palau it was obvious that the Church needs of his collaboration in the battle against the forces of evil, against the sin existing inside and outside of her. The testimony of word and deed of the believers, their decided option for the supreme value of following the Gospel, are things that build the Church, adorn her, makes her closer to what she was called to be from the beginning and to what she will be at the end. Our testimony, or its lack, have repercussions in the life of the Church, here and now, and in her future. Let us make some effort to make already here and now of the Church the place where God dwells with his people, where both God and people would be pleased to be, where there would be no tears, pain, tiredness.

**Which of you needs conversion in order to truly be a credible witness to the Church?**





Let us end this reflection with the prayer proposed for the gatherings of the Synod of the Church that will be celebrated in 2023 but that from today can already illumine our journeying as the Church:

*We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.*

*With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts;*

*Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.*

*We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.*

*Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.*

*Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together  
to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.*

*All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.*

*Amen.*

**Let us ask for the grace that we desire through the intercession of Blessed 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.

