

# Friday 14th in Ordinary Time

**Gospel text (Mt 10,16-23): Jesus said to his disciples, «Look, I send you out like sheep among wolves. You must be clever as snakes and innocent as doves. Be on your guard with respect to people, for they will hand you over to their courts and they will flog you in their synagogues. You will be brought to trial before rulers and kings because of me, and so you may witness to them and the pagans. But when you are arrested, do not worry about what you are to say and how you are to say it; when the hour comes, you will be given what you are to say. For it is not you who will speak; but it will be the Spirit of your Father in you.**

**»Brother will hand over brother to death, and a father his child; children will turn against parents and have them put to death. Everyone will hate you because of me, but whoever stands firm to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next. For sure, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes».**

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***«Everyone will hate you because of me»***

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Today, the Gospel emphasizes the troubles and contradictions we Christians have to suffer because of Christ and his Gospel, and how we must stand firm and persevere to the end. Jesus promised us: «I am with you always, until the end of the age» (Mt 28:20); but He did not promise his disciples an easy journey; on the contrary, He told them: «Everyone will hate you because of me» (Mt 10:22).

The Church and the world are two difficult to coexist realities. Church is bound to convert the world to Jesus Christ, but our world is not a neutral reality, as if of

virgin wax waiting for the mould to shape it. This is what it would have been like, had there not been a history of sin between the creation of man and his redemption. But, as an isolated from God structure, the world obeys another lord, that St. John's Gospel names as “the lord of this world”, the soul's foe, whom —when baptized— the Christian has promised to disobey to, to stand up to him, so as to only belong to Jesus Christ and to the Mother Church, which begot him in Jesus Christ.

However, though christened, we still live in this world and not somewhere else; we do not give up our earthly citizenship nor do we deny our honest contribution to sustain and improve our world; our civic duties are also Christian duties; to pay taxes is a duty of fairness for Christians. Jesus said that his followers are in the world, but do not belong to the world (cf. Jn 17:14-15). We do not unconditionally belong to the world, we only belong to Jesus Christ and to the Church, our true spiritual fatherland, that is down here in our earth and goes through space and time barriers to finally disembark us in our definite destination, Heaven.

This double citizenship necessarily stumbles upon the forces of sin and its influence that powers the worldly mechanisms. When reviewing the history of Church, Newman said that «Church's brand is persecution and, perhaps, a longer-lasting one».