

Wednesday 31st in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 14,25-33): One day, when large crowds were walking along with Jesus, He turned and said to them, «If you come to me, without being ready to give up your love for your father and mother, your spouse and children, your brothers and sisters, and indeed yourself, you cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not follow me carrying his own cross cannot be my disciple.

»Do you build a house without first sitting down to count the cost to see whether you have enough to complete it? Otherwise, if you have laid the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone will make fun of you: ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish’. And when a king wages war against another king, does he go to fight without first sitting down to consider whether his ten thousand can stand against the twenty thousand of his opponent? And if not, while the other is still a long way off he sends messengers for peace talks. In the same way, none of you may become my disciple if he doesn't give up everything he has».

«Whoever does not follow me carrying his own cross cannot be my disciple»

Fr. Joan GUITERAS i Vilanova

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Today, we can contemplate Jesus on his way towards Jerusalem. There, He will offer his life for the salvation of our world. «In those days, large crowds were walking along with Jesus» (Lk 14:25): the disciples, walking with Jesus, who precedes them, must learn to become new men. This is the final purpose of the instructions the Lord, in his ascent to the “City of peace”, exposes and proposes to those following him.

Disciple means “follower”. To follow the steps of the Master, to be like Him, to

think like Him, to live like Him... The disciple coexists with the Master and accompanies him. The Lord teaches with facts and words. They have certainly seen Christ's attitude before the Absolute and the relative. They have heard him saying quite often that God is the supreme value of our existence. They have admired the relation between Jesus and the celestial Father. They have seen the dignity and confidence, which Jesus displayed when praying to him. They have admired his radical poverty.

Today, the Lord speaks to us in clear-cut terms. Our Lord Jesus Christ must be loved by the true disciple with all his heart, well over all kind of ties, even the closest ones: «If you come to me, without being ready to give up your love for your father and mother, your spouse and children, your brothers and sisters, and indeed yourself, you cannot be my disciple» (Lk 14:26-27). In the follower's life, He is always the first one. St. Augustine says: «Let us reply to our father and to our mother: 'I love you in Christ, not instead of Christ'». In following Jesus even our love for life must rank as a second priority. To follow Jesus, after all, entails to embrace the Cross. Without the Cross there is no disciple.

The evangelic call exhorts to prudence, that is, the virtue dictating our adequate behavior. Who wants to build a house must first find out whether he can face the expense. The king who must fight, after figuring out his own forces, decides whether going to war or negotiating peace. He who wants to be a disciple of the Lord must first give up all his possessions. His own denial will be his best bet!