

Monday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 10:17-27): As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother." He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement, his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, "Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for one who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God." They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For men it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God."

"Go, sell what you have and give the money to the poor. Then come and follow me"

Fr. Joaquim PETIT Llimona, L.C.

Today, the liturgy presents a Gospel, which, if we face it with a sincere heart, makes it difficult for us to remain unconcerned.

Nobody can doubt of the good intentions of that man who knelt down before Jesus Christ to ask him: “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mk 10:17). St. Mark tells us that it is clear that in the man's heart there was a need for something else, for we must assume that —as a good Israelite— he knew quite well what the Law said, but, deep inside him, he felt an uneasiness, a need to go further on and, hence, his questioning Jesus.

In our Christian life we must learn to master that tendency we have to consider our faith just a mere matter of fulfillment. Our faith is much more than that. It is a sincere adhesion to Someone's heart, Someone who is God. When we set our heart upon something, we also place our life therein and, in the case of our faith, we then overcome the conformism that seems to grip the existence of so many believers. He who truly loves is never satisfied with giving just anything. He who loves is seeking a close and personal relationship; he takes advantage of the smallest details and knows how to discover in everything an opportunity to grow in his love. He who loves surrenders himself.

In fact, Jesus' reply to that man is an open door to his total deliverance to love: “Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” (Mk 10:21). It is not a matter of quitting everything for the sake of it; it is actually quitting to abandon oneself into Jesus' hands and it is abandoning oneself because that is a the genuine expression of one's loving. It would be great if our relation with God is of such magnitude. To pray, to serve, to work, to excel, to sacrifice oneself... all these are forms of deliverance and, consequently, forms of love. Let the Lord find in ourselves not only a sincere heart, but also a generous heart open to the demands of love. Because —as John Paul II said— “the love which comes from God, a tender and spousal love, gives rise to profound and radical demands.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“I can do very little, or rather absolutely nothing, if I am alone; what consoles me is to think that at your side I can be useful for something. In fact, zero by itself has no value, but when placed next to a unit it becomes powerful, provided, however, that it be placed on the right side.” (Saint Therese of Lisieux)

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“Earthly riches occupy and preoccupy the mind and the heart. Jesus does not say they are bad, but that they distance one from God if they are not spent to come to the help of those who are poor.” (Benedict XVI)

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“(…) Following Jesus Christ involves keeping the Commandments. the Law has not been abolished, but rather man is invited to rediscover it in the person of his Master who is its perfect fulfillment. In the three synoptic Gospels, Jesus' call to the rich young man to follow him, is joined to the call to poverty and chastity.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N° 2053)