June 21st: Memorial of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, Religious

Gospel text (*Mt* 22,34-40): When the Pharisees heard how Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. One of them, a teacher of the Law, tried to test him with this question, «Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the Law?». Jesus answered, «'You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind' (...)».

Saint Aloysius Gonzaga (1568-1591)

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today we celebrate Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, patron of Christian youth. Leaving behind all the perspectives offered by his family ancestry he gave himself to God when he was very young and gave his life with a reputation for holiness when he was just 23 years old. Aloysius certainly died young (younger than Jesus Christ!). But what is the true "youth"? What does being young depend on? In words of Pope Francis, "Youth is more than simply a period of time; it is a state of mind." The calculation of the years is a superficial criterion to calculate the state of youth.

If Christ is risen, if "Jesus lives", then the scale of youth is another: love, that is, Jesus himself. Here is the "new scale": «That you love one another as I have loved you» (Jn 13:34).

- Saint Aloysius was living charity when the Jesuits cared for the victims of an epidemic that affected Rome in 1591. He contracted the fever of that epidemic carrying patients behind his back and taking care of them. But was his earthly existence really "short"? Perhaps not so short, since "our life on earth reaches full stature when it becomes an offering" (Pope Francis).