Monday of the First Week of Lent

Gospel text (*Mt* 25:31-46): Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

"Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

Fr. Joaquim MONRÓS i Guitart
(Tarragona, Spain)

Today we are reminded of the final judgment, “when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him” (Mt 25:31), and it is pointed out to us that giving food, drink, clothing… are works of love for a Christian, when in doing them, one knows how to see Christ himself in them.

St. John of the Cross says: “At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love. Learn to love as God desires to be loved and abandon your own ways of acting.” Not doing something that must be done, in the service of other children of God and our brothers, means leaving Christ without these details of due love: sins of omission.

The Second Vatican Council, in Gaudium et Spes, explaining the demands of Christian charity, which gives meaning to so-called social assistance, says: “In our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbor of every person without exception and of actively helping him when he comes across our path, whether he be an old person abandoned by all, a foreign laborer unjustly looked down upon, a refugee, or a hungry person who disturbs our conscience by recalling the voice of the Lord, ‘As long as you did it for one of these the least of my brethren, you did it for me’ (Mt 25:40).”

Let us remember that Christ lives in Christians… and tells us: “I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Mt 28:20).

The Fourth Lateran Council defines the final judgment as a truth of faith: “He will come at the end of time to judge the living and the dead, to render to every person according to his works, both to the reprobate and to the elect (…) so as to receive according to their deserts, whether these be good or bad; for the latter perpetual punishment with the devil, for the former eternal glory with Christ.”

Let us ask Mary to help us in the actions of service to her Son in our brothers and sisters.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Let us sacrifice ourselves to God, let us go on sacrificing throughout every day and at every moment, let us gladly mount upon the Cross.” (Saint Gregory Nazianzen)

- “In the corporal works of mercy we touch the flesh of Christ in our brothers and sisters who need to be fed, clothed, sheltered, visited. By touching the flesh of the crucified Jesus in the suffering, sinners can receive the gift of realizing that they too are poor and in need.” (Francis)

- “Jesus shares the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; he experiences hunger, thirst and privation. Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for

entering his kingdom." (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, № 544)