Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent

Gospel text (*Mt* 5:17-19): Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.”

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.”

Fr. Vicenç GUINOT i Gómez
(Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Spain)

Today there is much respect for the different religions. They all express man's search for transcendence, the search for the beyond, for eternal realities. In contrast, in Christianity, which has its roots in Judaism, this phenomenon is reversed: it is God who seeks man.

As John Paul II recalled, God wants to draw close to man, God wants to address his words to him, to show him his face because he seeks intimacy with him. This is made real in the people of Israel, the people chosen by God to receive his words. This is the experience of Moses when he says: " For what great nation is there that has gods so close to it as the Lord, our God, is to us whenever we call upon him?" (Dt 4:7). And, again, the psalmist sings that God “proclaims his word to Jacob, his statutes and laws to Israel. He has not done this for any other nation; of such laws they know nothing.” (Ps 147:19-20).

Jesus, therefore, with his presence fulfills God's desire to draw close to man. For this reason, he says: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill" (Mt 5:17). He comes to enrich them, to enlighten them so that man may know the true face of God and may enter into intimacy with Him.

In this sense, to underestimate God’s instructions, however insignificant they may be, entails a limited knowledge of God and, therefore, one will be considered small in the Kingdom of Heaven. And it is because, as Saint Theophilus of Antioch said, " God is seen by those who are enabled to see Him when they have the eyes of their soul opened (...), but some men have them tarnished."

Let us aspire, then, in prayer to follow with great fidelity all the Lord’s instructions. In this way, we will reach a great intimacy with Him and, therefore, we will be considered great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Preparing man for his friendship with God, the Lord Himself did speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us, receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation.” (Saint Irenaeus)

- “Every precept reveals its full meaning as a requirement of love, and they all come together in the greatest commandment: to love God with all of your heart and to love your neighbour as yourself.” (Francis)

- “The Law of the Gospel fulfills the commandments of the Law. The Lord's Sermon on the Mount, far from abolishing or devaluing the moral prescriptions of the Old Law, releases their hidden potential and has new demands arise from them: it reveals their entire divine and human truth.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 1968)