Tuesday of the Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 5:43-48): Jesus said to his disciples: "You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect."

"Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect"

Fr. Iñaki BALLBÉ i Turu
(Terrassa, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Christ invites us to love. To love without measure, which is the measure of true Love. God is Love, "for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust" (Mt 5:45). And man, God's spark, has to keep on struggling every day to resemble him, so "that you may be children of your heavenly Father". Where can we find Christ's face? On others, on our nearest fellow men. It is easy to feel sorry for the starving children in the poorest countries when we watch them on TV, or for all those refugees fleeing from their countries at war. But, what about those at home? What about our co-workers? And what about that distant relative living alone and whom we could pay a visit to, to keep him company? How do we treat others? How do we love them? What specific deeds of service have we towards them, every day?

It is certainly very easy to love those who love you. But our Lord is urging us to go a step further, "if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have?" (Mt 5:46). To love our enemies! To love those we know —for sure— will never return our affection, or our smiles, or that favor. Simply because they ignore us. A

Christian, all Christians, should not love in a “self-interested” way; it is not enough to give a piece of bread or our alms to a homeless person on the street. We have to give ourselves to the others. When dying on the Cross, Christ forgave those who crucified him. No reproach, no complaint, not even an angry face...

Love without expecting anything in return. When it comes to loving we don’t calculate. Perfection is to love with no measure. And we hold perfection in our hands amidst the world, in our daily chores. By doing what we should in every instance, not what we would like to do. God's Mother, at the wedding of Cana in Galilee, realizes the guests have no more wine and asks the Lord to do the miracle. Let us beg Him today the miracle of finding out the needs of our own neighbors.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Love is sufficient for itself. Love needs no cause beyond itself, nor does it demand fruit. It is its own purpose. I love because I love.” (Saint Bernard)
- “Why does Jesus ask us to love precisely our enemies, that is, a love which exceeds human capacities? Because it takes into account that in the world there is too much violence, too much injustice, and therefore that this situation cannot be overcome except by countering it with more love.” (Benedict XVI)
- “All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity. All are called to holiness: ‘Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (Mt 5:48).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 2013)