

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (Mt 10:37-42): Jesus said to his apostles: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

"Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because the little one is a disciple— amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward."

***"Whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.
Whoever receives you receives me"***

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Today, upon listening to Jesus' words, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me..." (Mt 10,37), we are puzzled. However, as we delve deeper, we realize the lesson the Lord wants to convey: for Christians, the only absolute is God and His Kingdom. Everyone must discover their vocation - possibly the most delicate task of all - and faithfully follow it. If a Christian man or woman has a marital vocation, they should realize that fulfilling their vocation consists in loving their family as Christ loves the Church.

The vocation to religious life or priesthood asks not to put family ties before those

of faith, as long as we do not fail to meet the basic requirements of Christian charity. Family ties cannot enslave and stifle the vocation to which we are called. Behind the word "love" can hide a possessive desire for the other that takes away their freedom to develop their human and Christian life; or the fear of leaving the family nest and facing the demands of life and Jesus' call to follow him. It is this distortion of love that Jesus asks us to transform into a free and generous love, because, as Saint Augustine says, "Christ has come to transform love."

Love and hospitality will always be at the core of the Christian life, towards everyone and, above all, towards our family members, because they are usually the closest and also constitute the "neighbor" that Jesus asks us to love. In welcoming others, there is always the welcoming of Christ: "Whoever receives you receives me" (Mt 11,40). Therefore, we must see Christ in those we serve, and also recognize Christ the servant in those who serve us.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Through pains and wounds and favors, God forms His children for eternal life" (Saint Gregory the Great)
- "So often in countless ways we are asked to compromise our faith, to water down the radical demands of the Gospel and to conform to the spirit of this age. Yet the martyrs call out to us to put Christ first" (Francis)
- "(...) It is necessary to convince oneself that the primary vocation of the Christian is to follow Jesus (cf. Mt 16,25) (...)" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2.232)