

Sunday 13th (A) in Ordinary Time

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 come after me is not worthy of me. One who wants to benefit from his life will lose it; one who loses his life for my sake will find it.

»Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes him who sent me. The one who welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive the reward of a prophet; the one who welcomes a just man because he is a just man will receive the reward of a just man. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones, because he is a disciple of mine, I assure you, he will not go unrewarded».

«And whoever does not take up his cross and come after me is not worthy of me. Whoever welcomes you welcomes me»

Fr, Antoni POU OSB Monk of Montserrat
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Today, listening to Jesus' words: «Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me...» (Mt 10:37) we cannot help being taken somewhat aback. However, if we mull over these words a little more intently, we may discern the lesson our Lord is transmitting us: for the true Christian, God and his Kingdom are the only absolute Reality. Each person must first discover his/her vocation —maybe this is the most delicate task to carry out— and, subsequently, he/she must remain faithful to it. If a Christian has a matrimonial vocation, he/she must realize that carrying it out certainly implies loving his/her family as Christ loves his Church.

On the other hand, vocation to priesthood or religious life requires giving priority to one's faith over any family ties, provided this does not mean failing the basic

requisites of christian charity. Family ties cannot enslave and strangle our vocation, to which we have been called. Below the word “love” there may be a possessive desire of the other person that limits his/her freedom to display his/her human and Christian life; whether it is a fear to abandon the family nest and face the life demands or the call from Jesus to follow him. It is this love deformation that Jesus is asking us to transform into a gratuitous and generous loving, because, as St. Augustine says: «Christ has come to transform love».

For our fellow man and, most than all, for our family, who are normally those closer to us and also constitute the “neighbour” Jesus is requesting us to love, love and welcome will always remain the nucleous of our Christian life. In accepting the other one there is always Christ’s acceptance: «Whoever welcomes you welcomes me» (Mt 10:40). We must therefore see and know the Lord in those we serve, while recognizing Christ as our saviour in those serving us.