Thursday of the Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 11:28-30): Jesus said: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened…, and you will find rest”

Fr. Julio César RAMOS González SDB
(Mendoza, Argentina)

Today, facing a world which decided to turn its back on God, in front of a world hostile to Christianity and to Christians, to listen to Jesus (who is the One who is talking to us in the liturgy or in the private reading of the Word) brings consolation, joy and hope in the middle of our daily struggles: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened…, and you will find rest” (Mt 11:28-29).

Consolation, as these words contain the promise of relief, which comes from God’s love. Joy, as they make the heart feel the security of faith in this promise. Hope, as walking in a world rebelled against God and ourselves, we who believe in God know that not everything comes to an end, although many “ends” have turned into “beginnings” of much better things, as His own Resurrection proves.

Our aim, a starting point to the love of God, is to be permanently united with Christ. This is the “yoke” of a law which is not based on the limited capacity of human motivations, but on the eternal saving willingness of God.

In this sense Benedict XVI tells us: “God has a will with and for us and it must become the measure of our willing and being; and the essence of ‘heaven’ is that it is where God’s will is unswervingly done. Or, to put it in somewhat different terms, where God’s will is done is heaven. Jesus himself is ‘heaven’ in the deepest and truest sense of the word—he in whom and through whom God’s will is wholly done. The gravitational pull of our own will constantly draws us away from God’s will and turns us into mere ‘earth.’ But he accepts us, he draws us up to himself, into himself, and in communion with him we too learn God’s will.” Amen!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Christ's burden is so light that it lightens. You won't be pressed down by it. Think of the burden of Christ as being like the burden of wings for birds. As long as a bird is burdened by wings, it can fly. Without wings it is trapped on earth.” (Saint Augustine)

- “The meekness and humility of Jesus become attractive to those who are called to enter his school: 'Learn from me'. Jesus is ‘the faithful’ witness of the love with which God nourishes man.” (Saint John Paul II)

- “This unequivocal insistence on the indissolubility of the marriage bond may have left some perplexed and could seem to be a demand impossible to realize. However, Jesus has not placed on spouses a burden impossible to bear, or too heavy (Cf. Mt 11:29-30) - heavier than the Law of Moses. By coming to restore the original order of creation disturbed by sin, he himself gives the strength and grace to live marriage in the new dimension of the Reign of God.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 1615)

Other comments

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened”

Brother Lluís SERRA i Llançana
(Roma, Italy)

Today, Jesus' words resound intimate and close. We are conscious that contemporary men and women suffer a considerable psychological pressure. This world keeps on turning in a way that we have neither time nor inner peace to assimilate these changes. Quite often we move away from the evangelic simplicity by loading ourselves up with rules, commitments, planning and objectives. We feel overwhelmed and tired of continuously struggling without our effort being worth its while. Recent investigations affirm that nervous breakdowns are on their way up all the time. What are we lacking to feel actually well?

Today, at the light of the Gospel, we may review our conception of God. How do I live and feel God in my heart? What feelings uncover his presence in my life? Jesus offers us his understanding when we feel weary and want to rest: “Come to me, all you who work hard and who carry heavy burdens and I will refresh you” (Mt 11:28). Maybe we have fought for perfection while, deep inside, the only thing we wanted was to feel loved. In Jesus' words we find a response to our crisis of meaning. Our ego plays some dirty tricks on us by preventing us from being as good as we would like to. At times we may not see the light. St. Juliana of Norwich, English mystic of the fourteenth century, had a revelation, heard Jesus’ message, and wrote: “All will go well, everything will go well.”

Jesus' proposal —“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me…” (Mt 11:29)— implies following his benevolent style of life (to wish good to everybody) and his heart’s humility (virtue referring to keep our feet on the ground for only the divine grace can make us ascend). To be a disciple demands our accepting Jesus' yoke, while remembering his yoke is “good” and his burden is “light”. I do not know, however,

whether we are convinced this is really so. To live as a Christian in our present context is not such an easy thing, for we have to opt for values that go upstream. Not to get carried away by money, prestige or power demands a great effort. If we want to achieve it by ourselves, it may become an impossible task. But with Jesus everything is possible and good.