Monday of the Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 17:22-27): As Jesus and his disciples were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were overwhelmed with grief.

When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax approached Peter and said, "Does not your teacher pay the temple tax?" "Yes," he said. When he came into the house, before he had time to speak, Jesus asked him, "What is your opinion, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take tolls or census tax? From their subjects or from foreigners?" When he said, "From foreigners," Jesus said to him, "Then the subjects are exempt. But that we may not offend them, go to the sea, drop in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. Open its mouth and you will find a coin worth twice the temple tax. Give that to them for me and for you."

"Jesus and his disciples were gathering in Galilee"

Fr. Joaquim PETIT Llimona, L.C.
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Today, the liturgy offers us several points for reflection. Among them, we might pause to consider something that runs quietly through the entire passage: Jesus' familiar, intimate way of being with His own.

St. Matthew tells us that "Jesus and his disciples were gathering in Galilee" (Mt 17:22). At first glance, it might seem like a minor detail—but the simple mention that they were "together" reveals the evangelist's desire to highlight Christ's closeness to His disciples. Then Jesus opens His Heart to them, sharing the path of His Passion, Death, and Resurrection—something He carries deep within Himself, something He doesn't want those He loves so much to be unaware of. Immediately afterward, we read the episode about the temple tax. Here too, the evangelist gives us a glimpse of Jesus' way of relating—placing Himself on the same level as Peter. He draws a distinction between the "sons" (Jesus and Peter), who are free from the tax, and the "others" who are obliged to pay. And then, with remarkable gentleness, Jesus shows Peter how to obtain the money—not just to cover His own payment, but for both of them—so as not to become a cause of scandal.

In all of these moments, we discover something fundamental to the Christian life: Jesus' deep desire to be

with us. As the Lord says in the Book of Proverbs: “Playing over the whole of his earth, having my delight with human beings” (Prov 8:31). How this changes our whole approach to the spiritual life! So often, we place the focus entirely on what we are doing, as if our efforts were what mattered most. But the interior life must center on Christ—on His love for us, on His total self-gift, even unto death for me, on His tireless pursuit of our hearts. Saint John Paul II captured this beautifully in one of his encounters with young people. The Pope cried out with strength and clarity: “Look to Him!”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “His passion is our resurrection.” (Saint Ignatius of Antioch)

- “A new worship is being introduced, in a Temple not built by human hands. This Temple is his body, the Risen One, who gathers the peoples and unites them in the sacrament of his body and blood.” (Benedict XVI)

- “Jesus venerated the Temple by going up to it for the Jewish feasts of pilgrimage, and with a jealous love he loved this dwelling of God among men. The Temple prefigures his own mystery. When he announces its destruction, it is as a manifestation of his own execution and of the entry into a new age in the history of salvation, when his Body would be the definitive Temple.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, № 593)