Monday of the Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 19:16-22): A young man approached Jesus and said, “Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?” He answered him, “Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” He asked him, “Which ones?” And Jesus replied, “You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The young man said to him, “All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

“Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?”

Fr. Enrique AMAT i Busquets
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Today, the Gospel presents us with the rich young man, a youth who deeply thirsted for eternity: "Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?" (Mt 19:16). That yearning for happiness is inscribed in every person's soul, for we have all been created by Love and destined for full communion with Him. What, then, was the obstacle that prevented this young man from following Jesus? His heart was still attached to worldly possessions. That young man had a noble desire, but he understood the path to salvation as merely following a set of rules: "All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?" (Mt 19:20).

To attain the salvation of our souls, we must allow God to reign over our lives so that the Holy Spirit may strip away everything that does not come from Him—even those things which, though good, might hinder our holiness. His love for us knows no bounds, and that is why He does not want to leave us trapped in our selfishness and our iniquity: "To each of you I say: God loves you just as you are, but he dreams of you being even better!" (Leo XIV).

Jesus invites us to aim high and to lift our gaze toward eternal goods. He opens a path of salvation founded upon the love and freedom that only He can bestow. He shows us that the Christian journey does not consist solely of doing things (keeping commandments) but primarily of allowing ourselves to be transformed by His grace, without setting conditions: "If, then, you are God's workmanship, await the hand of your Maker which creates everything in due time. Offer to Him your heart in a soft and tractable state, and preserve the form in which the Creator has fashioned you, having moisture in yourself, lest, by becoming hardened, you lose the impressions of His fingers" (Saint Irenaeus).

Let us ask God to help us be generous and courageous in following Him, and not to be afraid to surrender ourselves to His will. The reward is very great: He “will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life" (Mt 19:29).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “If you are not master of yourself — though you may be powerful — your air of mastery moves me to pity and laughter.” (Saint Josemaría)

- “Jesus shows that the commandments must not be understood as a minimum limit not to be gone beyond, but rather as a path involving a moral and spiritual journey towards perfection, at the heart of which is love.” (Saint John Paul II)

- “‘Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?’ To the young man who asked this question, Jesus answers first by invoking the necessity to recognize God (..) as the supreme Good (...). Then Jesus tells him: ‘If you would enter life, keep the commandments’ (...). Finally Jesus sums up these commandments positively: ‘You shall love your neighbor as Yourself’” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2052)

Other comments

“Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?”

Fr. Óscar MAIXÉ i Altés
(Roma, Italy)

Today the Liturgy of the Word places before us the famous passage of the rich young man— that young man who could not respond to the loving gaze with which Christ looked at him (cf. Mk 10:21). Saint John Paul II reminds us that in that young man we can recognize every person who approaches Christ and asks about the meaning of their own life: “Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?” (Mt 19:16). He said that “The young man senses that there is a connection between moral good and the fulfilment of his own destiny”

Even today, how many people ask themselves this same question! And yet, when we look around, we might think there are only a few who can see beyond the present moment, or perhaps believe that modern man no longer needs to ask such questions—since, in their minds, the answers have nothing to offer them.

Jesus replies: “Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments” (Mt 19:17). Asking about what lies beyond this life—about the meaning

of life itself—is not only legitimate; it is necessary! The young man asked what he had to do to inherit eternal life, and Christ's answer was simple: he must be good.

Today, for some—or for many—it may seem impossible to "be good." Or it might seem meaningless—something foolish! But today, just as twenty centuries ago, Christ reminds us that in order to enter eternal life it is necessary to keep God's commandments. This is not some lofty "ideal" for a select few; it is the necessary path for us to be conformed to God, so that they may enter eternal life in the hands of our Father-God. Indeed, "Jesus shows that the commandments must not be understood as a minimum limit not to be gone beyond, but rather as a path involving a moral and spiritual journey towards perfection, at the heart of which is love" (Saint John Paul II).