Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 14:25-33): Great crowds were traveling with Jesus, and he turned and addressed them, “If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work the onlookers should laugh at him and say, ‘This one began to build but did not have the resources to finish.’ Or what king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops? But if not, while he is still far away, he will send a delegation to ask for peace terms.

In the same way, anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.”

“Anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.”

Fr. Joaquim MESEGUER García
(Rubí, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Jesus shows us the place that our neighbor should occupy in our hierarchy of love and speaks to us about the following of his person that should characterize Christian life, a journey that goes through various stages in which we accompany Jesus Christ with our cross: "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).

Does Jesus conflict with the Law of God, which commands us to honor our parents and love our neighbors, when he says: "If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26)? Naturally not. Jesus said that He did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it; therefore, He gives the correct interpretation. By demanding an

unconditional love, proper to God, He declares that He is God, that we must love Him above all things, and that we must order everything in His love. In love for God, which leads us to entrust ourselves confidently to Jesus Christ, we will love our neighbor with a sincere and just love. Saint Augustine says: "See, the desire for the truth and for knowing and finding the will of God in the holy Scriptures attracts you."

The Christian life is a continuous journey with Jesus. Today, many people claim to be Christians in theory, but in fact they do not walk with Jesus: they stay at the starting point and do not begin the journey, or they abandon it early, or they take another trip with other companions. The baggage for walking in this life with Jesus is the cross, each with his own; but, along with the share of pain that falls to us as followers of Christ, there is also the consolation with which God comforts his witnesses in every kind of trial. God is our hope, and in Him is the source of life.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Take advantage of little sufferings, even more than of great ones. God considers not so much what we suffer as how we suffer. To suffer a great deal, but badly, is to suffer like the damned; to suffer much, even bravely, but for an evil cause, is to suffer as a disciple of the devil; to suffer little or much for God's sake is to suffer like a saint.” (St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort)

- “There is always this journey, a journey that He took first: the journey of humility, the journey, too, of humiliation, of denying oneself, and then rising. But this is the path." (Francis)

- “(...) From the beginning, the first disciples burned with the desire to proclaim Christ: ‘We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.’ And they invite people of every era to enter into the joy of their communion with Christ” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 425)