

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.”

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

Today, Jesus clearly tells us the place all others must take in our hierarchy of love,

while also explaining that following His person demonstrates our Christian way of life. A path going through different stages, where we must join Jesus with our Cross: “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).

When Jesus tells his disciples: “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” (Lk 14:26), is He entering into a conflict with the Law of God that orders us to honor our parents and to love our fellow men? Certainly not. Jesus Christ already said He had not come to abolish the Law but to completely fulfill it; accordingly, He is the one to render the correct interpretation. When He demands an unconditional love, distinctive of God, He is pleading that He is God, whom we have to love above everything else and for whose love everything else has to be subordinate. By entrusting God with our lives, we shall also be able to love all others with a sincere and just love. St. Augustine says: “See, now, how you are dragging your yearning for God's truth and perceiving his own volition in the Holy Scriptures.”

Christian life is a non-stop journey with Jesus. Now-a-days, theoretically, many claim to be Christians, but, in fact, they are not sharing their journey with Jesus: they stay put at the starting point and do not even begin their trip, or give it up as soon as they can, or just take a different trip with other fellow travelers. The luggage we carry to make the journey of our life along with Jesus is the Cross, each one with his own; but, all along, with our share of suffering for those following Christ, there is also included the consolation which God soothes his beholders with, in all their trials. God is our hope and the source of life is in Him.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“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 Grignon de Montfort)

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“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)

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“(…) 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)