Monday of the Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 9:46-50): An argument arose among the disciples about which of them was the greatest. Jesus realized the intention of their hearts and took a child and placed it by his side and said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. For the one who is least among all of you is the one who is the greatest.

”Then John said in reply, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow in our company.” Jesus said to him, “Do not prevent him, for whoever is not against you is for you.”

“The one who is least among all of you is the one who is the greatest”

Prof. Dr. Mons. Lluís CLAVELL
(Roma, Italy)

Today, on the way to Jerusalem leading to the Passion, "an argument arose among the disciples about which of them was the greatest" (Lk 9:46). Every day, the media and our own conversations are filled with talk about people's importance: that of others and our own. This uniquely human logic often gives rise to a desire for success, for recognition, appreciation, and gratitude and robs us of our peace when that recognition never comes.

Jesus’s response to these thoughts —and perhaps even the remarks— of the disciples echoes the style of the ancient prophets. Gestures precede words. Jesus "took a child and placed it by his side" (Lk 9:47). Then comes the teaching: "The least among all of you is the one who is the greatest " (Lk 9:48). — Jesus, why is it so hard for us to accept that this isn’t just a utopian dream for people who aren’t caught up in the hustle and bustle of a demanding task —one in which clashes between people are all too common— and that, with your grace, we can all live this way? If we did, we would enjoy greater inner peace and work with more serenity and joy.

This attitude is also the wellspring of joy, as we see others working well for God—using a style different from our own, but always in the name of Jesus. The disciples wanted to stop them, but the Master defended those others. Once again, seeing ourselves as God’s little children makes it easier to keep our hearts open to everyone and to grow in peace, joy, and gratitude. These teachings earned Saint Thérèse of Lisieux the title of "Doctor of the Church": in her book “Story of a Soul”, she marvels at the Church as a

beautiful garden of flowers and rejoices in knowing herself to be a tiny blossom. Alongside the great saints —the roses and lilies— there are the little flowers —such as daisies or violets— destined to delight God's eyes when He turns His gaze toward the Earth.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "It is better to be a Christian without saying it, than to say it without being one. It is an excellent thing to teach, but on condition that what is taught is practiced" (Ignatius of Antioch)

- "Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse" (Francis)

- "Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 799)