Saturday of the Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 14:1.7-11): On a sabbath Jesus went to dine at the home of one of the leading Pharisees, and the people there were observing him carefully. He told a parable to those who had been invited, noticing how they were choosing the places of honor at the table. “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table in the place of honor. A more distinguished guest than you may have been invited by him, and the host who invited both of you may approach you and say, ‘Give your place to this man,’ and then you would proceed with embarrassment to take the lowest place. Rather, when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that when the host comes to you he may say, ‘My friend, move up to a higher position.’ Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

"Noticing how they were choosing the places of honor at the table"

Fr. Josep FONT i Gallart
(Getafe, Spain)

Today, did you notice the beginning of this Gospel? They—the Pharisees—were observing Him. And Jesus was observing too: "noticing how they were choosing the places of honor at the table" (Lk 14:7). What a different way of observing!

Observation, like all internal and external actions, varies greatly depending on the motivation behind it, on internal motives, and on what is in the observer’s heart. The Pharisees—as the Gospel tells us in various passages—observe Jesus to accuse Him. And Jesus observes to help, to serve, and to do good. And, like a caring mother, He offers counsel: "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table in the place of honor" (Lk 14:8).

Jesus expresses in words who He is and what He holds in His heart: He does not seek to be honored, but to honor; He does not think of His own honor, but of the Father's. He thinks not of Himself, but of others. Jesus’ entire life is a revelation of who God is: "God is love."

That is why His teaching is realized in Jesus—more than in anyone else: "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and became like men... God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name" (Phil 2:7, 9).

Jesus is the Master in both deeds and words. We Christians want to be His disciples. We can only behave like the Master if we possess within our hearts what He held—if we possess His Spirit, the Spirit of love. Let us strive to open ourselves fully to His Spirit and to allow ourselves to be taken and possessed entirely by Him.

And let us do so without thinking of being "exalted," without thinking of ourselves, but only of Him. "Even if there were no heaven, I would love you, and, even if there were no hell, I would fear you; In the same way I love you, I would love you still." (Anonymous author). Driven solely by love.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “O how beautiful is a humble soul! From her heart, as from a censer, rises a varied and most pleasing fragrance which breaks through the skies and reaches God Himself” (Saint Faustina Kowalska)

- “Christ himself ‘took the lowest place in the world the Cross and by this radical humility he redeemed us and constantly comes to our aid’” (Benedict XVI)

- “Contemplative prayer is the simplest expression of the mystery of prayer. It is a gift, a grace; it can be accepted only in humility and poverty…” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 2,713)