

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"

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Today, did you notice the beginning of this Gospel? The Pharisees were carefully watching Jesus. Jesus also watched them and noticed how they tried to take the places of honor (cf. Lk 14:1.7). But... what a different way to watch!

Observation, as any other internal or external action, substantially varies depending upon the motivations that provoke it, depending upon the internal motives, upon what the observer's heart has inside. The Pharisees—as mentioned in different places of the Gospel—always observe Jesus in an attempt to incriminate Him in doing something wrong. And Jesus observes in order to help, to serve, to do well.

And, as a loving parent, advises: “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table in the place of honor” (Lk 13:8).

Jesus says with words who is He, what He has in his heart: He is not looking to be honored but to honor; He does not think of His honor, but of His Father's glorification. He does not think of Himself but of the other. Jesus' whole life is a revelation of who God is: “God is love”.

This is why, in Jesus, it becomes a reality —more than in anybody else— His teaching: “Rather, He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance... Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name” (Phil 2:7.9).

Jesus is Master in deeds and words. We, Christians, want to be His disciples. We can only assume the Master's behavior if we have inside our hearts what He had, if we have His Spirit, His Spirit of love. Let us work to completely open ourselves to His Spirit and to let Him get hold of us and be entirely possessed by Him.

And, let us do this, without thinking of being exalted, without thinking of ourselves, but only of Him. An unknown author wrote: “Should there be no heaven, I would love you; should there be no hell, I would be afraid of you; just as I love you I should love you”. Being only carried by love.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“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)

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“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)

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“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, n° 2,713)