# Tuesday of the Thirty-second Week in Ordinary Time

**Gospel text (*Lk* 17:7-10):** Jesus said to the Apostles: "Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here immediately and take your place at table'? Would he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished'? Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded? So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'"

***"We have done what we were obliged to do."***

Fr. Jaume AYMAR i Ragolta
*(Badalona, Barcelona, Spain)*

Today the focus of the Gospel is not on the attitude of the master, but on that of the servants. Through the example of a parable, Jesus invites His apostles to reflect on the attitude of service: the servant must fulfill his duty without expecting a reward. "Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded?" (Lk 17:9). Yet, this is not the final lesson of the Master regarding service. Jesus will later say to His disciples, "I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father" (Jn 15:15). Friends do not keep accounts. If servants must fulfill their duty, how much more should we, the apostles of Jesus—His friends—carry out the mission entrusted to us by God, knowing that our work deserves no reward, because we do it joyfully and because everything we have and are is a gift from God.

For the believer, everything is a sign; for the one who loves, everything is a gift. Working for the Kingdom of God is already our reward. Therefore, we should not say with sadness or reluctance, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do" (Lk 17:10), but rather with the joy of one who has been called to proclaim the Gospel.

In these days we also remember the feast of a great saint, a true friend of Jesus: Saint Martin of Tours, who dedicated his life to the service of the Gospel of Christ. Of him, Sulpicius Severus wrote: "O man, whom no language can describe, unconquered by toil, and unconquerable even by death, who showed no personal preference for either alternative, and who neither feared to die nor refused to live! With his hands and eyes steadfastly directed towards heaven, he never released his unconquerable spirit from prayer."

Indeed, in prayer—in our dialogue with the Friend—we find the secret and the strength of our service.

## *Thoughts on Today's Gospel*

- "Let us recognize the grace but not forget our nature. Don’t make much of it if you have done your duties well since you have done what you ought to do. The sun fulfils its role, the moon obeys, the angels carry out their duties" (Saint Ambrose)

- "If we do God's will today with humility, without claiming anything from him, it will be Jesus himself who serves us, who helps us, who encourages us, who gives us strength and serenity." (Benedict XVI)

- "The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. the choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to "the slavery of sin." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 1733)