

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 Gospel message is not based on the master's attitude, but on the servant's. Jesus, with a parable, invites His apostles to consider the stance of service: the servant should fulfill his duties without expecting any reward: “Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded?” (Lk 17:9). However, this is not the Master's last lesson on service. Later on, Jesus will tell 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 have to render accounts to each other. If servants are to fulfill their duties, we, His apostles, who are Jesus' friends, must, even more so, accomplish the mission God has entrusted us with, while realizing our work does not deserve any recompense, for we do it joyously and, because whatever we have, whatever we are, is a gift we have received from God.

For those who believe, everything is a sign, for those who love, everything is a gift. Working for God's Kingdom is already a great reward; hence, the expression “We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do” (Lk 17:10)

should not be interpreted with dejection or sadness, but with the joy of one who knows that he has been called to spread the knowledge of the Gospel.

These days we also keep in mind the feast of a great saint, a great friend of Jesus, and very popular in the territory of Catalonia, St. Martin of Tours, who devoted all his life to the service of the Gospel of Christ. Sulpicius Severus writes of him: "Extraordinary man, whom neither toil and suffering, nor the fact of death could bend his resolve; he did not lean toward either side, he was not afraid of dying, but he did not refuse to live! Eyes and hands towards Heaven, his undefeated spirit kept on praying." In our prayers, in our dialogue with our Friend, that is where the secret and the strength of our service lie.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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"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)

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"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)

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"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)