

Tuesday of the Thirty-second Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 17,7-10): Jesus said to his disciple, «Who among you would say to your servant coming in from the fields after plowing or tending sheep: ‘Come at once and sit down at table?’. No, you tell him: ‘Prepare my dinner. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink; you can eat and drink afterwards’. Do you thank this servant for doing what you commanded? So for you. When you have done all that you have been told to do, you must say: ‘We are no more than servants; we have only done our duty’».

«We have only done our duty»

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: «Do you thank this servant for doing what you 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 make 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 no more than servants; we have only done our duty» (Lk 17:10) should not be interpreted with dejection or sadness, but with the joy of he who knows that 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.