# Friday of the Sixth Week in Ordinary Time

**Gospel text (*Mk* 8:34-9,1):** Jesus summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life? Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.” He also said to them, “Amen, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come in power.”

***“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me”***

Fr. Joaquim FONT i Gassol
*(Igualada, Barcelona, Spain)*

Today the Gospel speaks to us of two complementary themes: our daily cross and its fruit, that is, Life with a capital L, supernatural and eternal.

We stand up to listen to the Holy Gospel, as a sign of wanting to follow its teachings. Jesus tells us to deny ourselves, a clear expression of not following "the pleasure of our whims" - as the psalm mentions - or of putting aside "deceitful riches", as St. Paul says. Taking up one's own cross is accepting the small mortifications that we find each day along the way.

The phrase that Jesus said in the priestly sermon in the Cenacle can help us in this: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit." (Jn 15:1-2). An enthusiastic gardener pampering the bunch so that it may reach a great height! Yes, we want to follow the Lord! Yes, we are aware that the Father can help us to bear abundant fruit in our earthly life and then to enjoy eternal life.

St. Ignatius guided St. Francis Xavier with the words of today's text: "What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (Mk 8:36). Thus, he became the patron of the Missions. In the same vein, we read the last canon of the Code of Canon Law (n. 1752): "(...) the salvation of souls, which must always be the supreme law in the Church, is to be kept before one’s eyes." St. Augustine has the famous lesson: "Animam salvasti tuam predestinasti," which the popular adage has been translated as: "Whoever

obtains the salvation of a soul, has his own already assured." The invitation is obvious.

Mary, the Mother of Divine Grace, gives us her hand to advance on this path.

## *Thoughts on Today's Gospel*

- "I am still a slave. But if I suffer, I shall be emancipated by Jesus Christ; and united to him, I shall rise to freedom." (Ignatius of Antioch)

- "The theological, spiritual and ascetic tradition, from the most ancient times, has maintained the need to follow Christ in the passion, not only as an imitation of his virtues, but also as a cooperation in the universal redemption" (St. John Paul II)

- "The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the "one mediator between God and men" (1 Tim 2:5). But because in his incarnate divine person he has in some way united himself to every man, "the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery" is offered to all men (Second Vatican Council). He calls his disciples to "take up [their] cross and follow (him)" (Mt 16:24) (...)." (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 618)