Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 6:27-38): Jesus said to his disciples: “To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give, and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful”

Fr. Josep Miquel BOMBARDÓ
(Sabadell, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we hear our Lord invites us to live the life of Christian charity as fully as He did (“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” Lk 23:34). This has been the example of our brothers and sisters preceding us to the glory of Heaven, the Saints; for they lived a model of Christian charity with perfection, following what Jesus Christ had said: “So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48).

Charity urges us to love, in the first place, those who love us. It is not possible to abide by what we read in the Gospel if we do not sincerely love our brothers and sisters, those next to us. But, right away, Christ's new commandment calls us to reach to the perfection of charity, and encourages us to open our

arms to all people, to those who do not belong amongst ourselves, or who want to offend or hurt us. Jesus is exhorting us to have a Heart like His, like his Father's: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36), a heart that knows no borders, that welcomes everybody, and invites us to forgive and pray for our enemies.

However, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms, “it is not possible to observe the Commandments of our Lord if we are trying to follow the Divine model only from the outside. It must be a vital participation, that comes all the way from deep inside our heart, in sanctity, in mercifulness and in the love of God.” Cardinal Newman wrote: “O Jesus! Help us to spread your fragrance everywhere we go. Flood our souls with your spirit and life. Penetrate and possess our whole being, so utterly, that our lives may only be a radiance of Yours (...). That every soul, we come in contact with, may feel Your presence in our soul. The light, O Jesus, will be all from You, none of it will be ours. It will be You shining on others through us.”

We shall love, forgive and embrace others only if our heart is magnified by our love for Christ.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Christ, by revealing God's love-mercy, at the same time demanded that men in turn allow themselves to be guided in their lives by love and mercy.” (Saint John Paul II)

- “The enemy is someone I must love. In the heart of God there are no enemies, God has children. We build walls, build barriers and classify people. God has children” (Francis)

- “In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord recalls the commandment, ‘You shall not kill,’ (Mt 5:21) and adds to it the proscription of anger, hatred, and vengeance. Going further, Christ asks his disciples to turn the other cheek, to love their enemies. (Cf. Mt 5:22-39; 5:44)” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 2262)