Tuesday of the Seventh Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 9:30-37): Jesus and his disciples left from there and began a journey through Galilee, but he did not wish anyone to know about it. He was teaching his disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death he will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to question him.

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.” Taking a child he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it he said to them, “Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.

“The Son of Man is to be handed over to men”

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Today the Gospel brings us two teachings from Jesus, which are closely linked to one another. On the one hand, the Lord announces to them that “they will kill him, and three days after his death he will rise” (Mk 9:31). This is the Father’s will for him: this is why he came into the world; this is how he wants to free us from the slavery of sin and eternal death; in this way Jesus will make us children of God. The Lord's surrender to the point of giving his life for us shows the infinity of God's Love: a Love without measure, a Love that does not mind lowering itself to the madness and scandal of the Cross.

It is terrifying to hear the reaction of the Apostles, still too busy contemplating themselves and forgetting to learn from the Master: “They did not understand the saying” (Mk 9:32), because along the way they were discussing who among them was the greatest, and, just in case they were to receive, they did not dare to ask him any questions.

With delicate patience, Jesus adds: we must become the last and servant of all. We must welcome the

simple and small, because the Lord has wanted to identify himself with them. We must welcome Jesus into our lives because in this way we are opening the doors to God himself. It is like a life program to follow.

This is how the Cure of Ars, Saint John Vianney, explains it clearly: “Whenever we are able to renounce our own will to do the will of others, as long as it does not go against God's law, we obtain great merits, which only God knows.” Jesus teaches with his words, but above all he teaches with his deeds. Those Apostles, at first slow to understand, after the Cross and the Resurrection, will follow in the same footsteps of their Lord and their God. And, accompanied by the Blessed Virgin Mary, they will become increasingly smaller so that Jesus may grow in them and in the world.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Blessed may you be, my Lord Jesus Christ. You redeemed our souls with your precious blood and most holy death, and in your mercy you led them from exile back to eternal life.” (Saint Bridget)

- “The ascent to God occurs precisely in the descent of humble service, in the descent of love.” (Benedict XVI)

- “It is not easy for man, wounded by sin, to maintain moral balance. Christ's gift of salvation offers us the grace necessary to persevere in the pursuit of the virtues. Everyone should always ask for this grace of light and strength, frequent the sacraments, cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and follow his calls to love what is good and shun evil.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 1811)