Monday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 10:17-27): As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother." He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement, his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, "Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for one who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God." They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For men it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God."

"Go, sell what you have and give the money to the poor. Then come and follow me"

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Today the liturgy presents us with a Gospel that is difficult to remain indifferent to if we approach it with sincerity of heart.

No one can doubt the good intentions of that young man who approached Jesus Christ to ask him a question: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mk 10:17). From what St. Mark tells us, it is clear that in that heart there was a need for something more, because it is easy to assume that — as a good Israelite — he knew very well what the Law said on the subject, but inside him there was a restlessness, a need to go further and, for that reason, he questions Jesus.

In our Christian life we must learn to overcome that vision that reduces faith to a matter of mere compliance. Our faith is much more. It is a heartfelt adherence to Someone, who is God. When we put our heart into something, we also put our life into it and, in the case of faith, we then overcome the conformism that seems to grip the existence of so many believers today. Those who love are not satisfied with giving just anything. Those who love, seek a personal, close relationship, take advantage of details and know how to discover in everything an opportunity to grow in love. Those who love, give themselves.

In reality, Jesus' answer to the young man's question is an open door to that total gift of love: "Go, sell what you have and give to the poor (...); then come, follow me" (Mk 10:21). It is not a matter of letting go for no reason; it is a letting go that is giving and it is a giving that is a genuine expression of love. Let us, then, open our hearts to that love-giving. Let us live our relationship with God in that key. Praying, serving, working, improving ourselves, sacrificing ourselves... all are paths of giving and, therefore, paths of love. May the Lord find in us not only a sincere heart, but also a generous heart open to the demands of love. Because - in the words of St. John Paul II - "the love which comes from God, a tender and spousal love, gives rise to profound and radical demands."

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "I can do very little, or rather absolutely nothing, if I am alone; what consoles me is to think that at your side I can be useful for something. In fact, zero by itself has no value, but when placed next to a unit it becomes powerful, provided, however, that it be placed on the right side." (Saint Therese of Lisieux)

- "Earthly riches occupy and preoccupy the mind and the heart. Jesus does not say they are bad, but that they distance one from God if they are not spent to come to the help of those who are poor." (Benedict XVI)

- "(...) Following Jesus Christ involves keeping the Commandments. the Law has not been abolished,but rather man is invited to rediscover it in the person of his Master who is its perfect fulfillment. In the three synoptic Gospels, Jesus' call to the rich young man to follow him, is joined to the call to poverty and chastity." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 2053)