

Monday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 10,17-27): Just as Jesus was setting out on his journey again, a man ran up, knelt before him and asked, «Good Master, what must I do to have eternal life?». Jesus answered, «Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not cheat, honor your father and mother». The man replied, «I have obeyed all these commandments since my childhood». Then Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him and he said, «For you, one thing is lacking. Go, sell what you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come and follow me». On hearing these words, his face fell and he went away sorrowful for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, «How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!». The disciples were shocked at these words, but Jesus insisted, «Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God». They were more astonished than ever and wondered, «Who, then, can be saved?». Jesus looked steadily at them and said, «For humans it is impossible, but not for God; all things are possible with God».

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

Today, the liturgy presents a Gospel, which, if we face it with a sincere heart, makes it difficult for us to remain unconcerned.

Nobody can doubt of the good intentions of that man who knelt down before Jesus Christ to ask him: «Good Master, what must I do to have eternal life?» (Mk 10:17). St. Mark tells us that it is clear that in the man's heart there was a need for something else, for we must assume that —as a good Israelite— he knew quite well what the Law said, but, deep inside him, he felt an uneasiness, a need to go further on and, hence, his questioning Jesus.

In our Christian life we must learn to master that tendency we have to consider our faith just a mere matter of fulfillment. Our faith is much more than that. It is a sincere adhesion to Someone's heart, Someone who is God. When we set our heart upon something, we also place our life therein and, in the case of our faith, we then overcome the conformism that seems to grip the existence of so many believers. He who truly loves is never satisfied with giving just anything. He who loves is seeking a close and personal relationship; he takes advantage of the smallest details and knows how to discover in everything an opportunity to grow in his love. He who loves surrenders himself.

In fact, Jesus' reply to that man is an open door to his total deliverance to love: «Go, sell what you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come and follow me» (Mk 10:21). It is not a matter of quitting everything for the sake of it; it is actually quitting to abandon oneself into Jesus' hands and it is abandoning oneself because that is the genuine expression of one's loving. It would be great if our relation with God is of such magnitude. To pray, to serve, to work, to excel, to sacrifice oneself... all these are forms of deliverance and, consequently, forms of love. Let the Lord find in ourselves not only a sincere heart, but also a generous heart open to the demands of love. Because —as John Paul II said— «the love which comes from God, a tender and spousal love, gives rise to profound and radical demands».