Tuesday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 10:28-31): Peter began to say to Jesus, "We have given up everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come. But many that are first will be last, and the last will be first."

"Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house (…) for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age (…) and eternal life in the age to come"

Fr. Jordi SOTORRA i Garriga
(Sabadell, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, just like that landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard, the Lord is seeking disciples, followers and friends. His, is a universal call. A captivating offer, the Lord entrust us with! On one condition, though. One condition that may dishearten us: "for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel" you are to leave "house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands" (cf. Mk 10:29).

But, is there any compensation? Shall there be any reward? Shall we make any gain out of it? Peter, in the name of the Apostles, reminds the Master: "We have given up everything and followed you" (Mk 10:28), as if asking: what benefit shall we get?

The Lord's promise is very generous: "you will receive a hundred times more now in this present age (…) and eternal life in the age to come" (cf Mk 10:30). He cannot be surpassed as far as generosity. But He adds: "with persecutions." Jesus is very realistic and He does not want to deceive anybody. To be a disciple of his, if we are truly so, will bring us troubles and problems. However, Jesus considers persecutions and troubles a reward, for they help us to grow, if we accept and live through them as an opportunity to gain in maturity and responsibility. Whatever act of sacrifice makes us more like Jesus Christ who, by dying in the Cross, saves us.

We have always time to revise our life and get closer to Jesus Christ, especially during the times of Advent and Lent. Through prayer and the sacraments, these times and all times, we can find out whether we are amongst the disciples He is seeking, and decide which our answer must be to that call. Next to radical responses (such as those from the Apostles) there are others. For many, "to leave house, brothers or

sisters, or father or mother…” will just mean whatever prevents us from living deeply in a close friendship with Jesus and, as a consequence, become his testimony before the world. And this is urgent, don't you think so?

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “‘Well, I assure you that there is no one…’. By this he does not mean that we abandon our parents, leaving them helpless, nor that we part with our wives, but rather that we prefer the honor of God to all that is perishable.” (Saint Bede the Venerable)

- “There is no doubt that the specific forms of following Christ are graduated by Him according to the conditions, the possibilities, the missions, the charisms of individuals and groups.” (Saint John Paul II)

- “Because they are members of the Body whose Head is Christ (Cf. Eph 1:22), Christians contribute to building up the Church by the constancy of their convictions and their moral lives. The Church increases, grows, and develops through the holiness of her faithful, until ‘we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ’ (Eph 4:13).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 2045)