Wednesday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 10:32-45): The disciples were on the way, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went ahead of them. They were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. Taking the Twelve aside again, he began to tell them what was going to happen to him. "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles who will mock him, spit upon him, scourge him, and put him to death, but after three days he will rise."

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." He replied, "What do you wish me to do for you?" They answered him, "Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left." Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the chalice that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" They said to him, "We can." Jesus said to them, "The chalice that I drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John. Jesus summoned them and said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

"For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many"

Fr. René PARADA Menéndez
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Today, the Lord teaches us what our attitude should be toward the Cross. His burning love for the will of his Father, to accomplish the salvation of humankind—of every man and woman—moves him to hasten to Jerusalem, where "he will be handed over… they will condemn him to death… they will scourge him and put him to death" (cf. Mk 10:33-34). Even though at times we may not understand, or may even be afraid of

the pain, suffering, or contradictions of each day, let us strive to unite ourselves—out of love for God's saving will— with the offering of the daily cross.

The frequent practice of prayer and the sacraments, especially the personal Confession of sins and the Eucharist, will increase our love for God and for others for God's sake, so that we will be able to say, "We can" (Mk 10:39), despite our miseries, fears, and sins. Yes, we will be able to embrace our daily cross (cf. Lk 9:23) out of love, with a smile; that cross which manifests itself in the ordinary and everyday: fatigue at work, the usual difficulties in family life and social relationships, etc.

Only if we embrace our daily cross, denying our own desires in order to serve others, will we be able to identify with Christ, who came "to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). Saint John Paul II explained that "Jesus' service attains its fullest expression in his death on the cross, that is, in his total gift of self." Let us, therefore, imitate Jesus Christ, constantly transforming our love for him into acts of service to all people: rich or poor, educated or uneducated, young or old, without distinction. Acts of service to draw them closer to God and free them from sin.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "True God and true man were combined to form one Lord, so that, as suited the needs of our case, one and the same Mediator between God and men could both die and rise." (Saint Leo the Great)

- "While it is usually the case that anything unclean touching something clean renders it unclean, here it is the other way around. Through this contact, the filth of the world is truly absorbed, wiped out, and transformed in the pain of infinite love." (Benedict XVI)

- "By his loving obedience to the Father, 'unto death, even death on a cross' (Phil 2:8), Jesus fulfils the atoning mission of the suffering Servant, who will 'make many righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities' (Is 53:11)." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 623)