Wednesday of the Second Week of Advent

Gospel text (*Mt* 11:28-30): Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

“My yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

Fr. Jacques PHILIPPE
(Cordes sur Ciel, France)

Today, Jesus leads us to rest in God. He certainly is a demanding Father, because He loves us and invites us to give Him everything; but He is not an executioner. When He requires something of us it is to help us grow in His love. His only commandment is to love. We can suffer for love, but we can also rejoice in love and rest in love...

Meekness toward God releases and opens up our heart. This is why, Jesus, while encouraging us to give ourselves up and take up our cross to follow Him, tells us: "My yoke is easy, and my burden light” (Mt 11:30). Although sometimes we may have trouble in obeying God's will, fulfilling it with love ends up filling us with joy: "Lead me in the path of your commandments, for that is my delight” (Ps 119:35).

I would like to tell you something. Sometimes, when after a rather exhausting day I go to sleep, I perceive a slight inner feeling that tells me: -would you not come for a moment in the chapel to keep Me company? After a few instants of confusion and resistance, I end up consenting and spend a few minutes with Jesus. Then, I go to sleep in peace and very happy, and the following morning I am not more tired than usual.

Yet, sometimes it is the other way round. Before a serious problem that concerns me, I say to myself: -Tonight I will pray for an hour in the chapel for it to be solved. And when going to the Chapel, a voice tells me at the bottom of my heart: -You know something? I would rather you would go to bed immediately and trust me; let Me look after your problem. And remembering my happy condition of "useless servant", I go to sleep in peace, leaving everything in the hands of the Lord...

All this is to say that God's will is where maximum love dwells, but not necessarily where there is maximum suffering... There is more love in resting thanks to our confidence than in letting our concern distress us!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “So light is the load of Christ, that not only does it not weigh down, but it even lifts up. It's a relief to carry it, so that you can be lifted up and lightened; if you put it down, you find yourself more weighed down than ever.” (Saint Augustine)

- “When God lays this arm on our shoulders as “his light yoke,” then that is precisely not a burden he is loading onto us, but rather the gesture of receiving us in love. The “yoke” of this arm is not a burden, but a gift of love that carries us and makes us sons.” (Benedict XVI)

- “The Word became flesh to be our model of holiness: ‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me (...)’ (Mt 11:29).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 459)

Other comments

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Fr. Jaume GONZÁLEZ i Padrós
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, the cycle of readings, which have Isaiah as the protagonist, comes to an end. Through him we can see how the Messiah's coming had been announced prophetically.

Waiting for the return of the Lord, for His “adventus”, demands a very clear determination not to lose heart, whatever happens in the meantime. We cannot ignore that the wait may not be easy, and we could easily end up thinking that, given our weakness, we would not be capable of persevering in living a Christian life tenaciously. The temptation to lose heart is always near for us who are weak by nature.

It can easily be forgotten that the Kingdom of God is open to man primarily as a result of God willing it to be, in spite of the resistance put up by those of us who lack a “determined determination”, determined enough to seek it ahead of all other things as an absolute priority. Too often do we complain about how tired we are: Once we have analyzed our results and found that our achievements are little, we may not be able to help reproaching the Lord for the little help we think He has provided us with, given the amount of work we have put in. Here is our sin! Turning God into our assistant, instead of understanding that the initiative is always His and that it is He who invests the most.

Isaiah, from the eschatological perspective that characterizes the first weeks of Advent, reminds us of how great and irresistible the power of the Holy One is.

We find the fulfillment of the prophet's words in Jesus. “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Mt 11:28). In the Lord, in His loving heart, we all find the necessary rest and strength not to lose spirit and, thus, to wait for Him with renewed love, while our souls do not stop blessing Him and our memories never forget His favors.