July 11th: Memorial of Saint Benedict, Abbot, patron saint of Europe

Gospel text (*Mt* 19,27-29): Peter said to Jesus: «You see we have given up everything to follow you: what will be our lot?». Jesus answered, «You who have followed me, listen to my words: on the Day of Renewal, when the Son of Man sits on his throne in glory, you, too, will sit on twelve thrones to rule the twelve tribes of Israel. As for those who have left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or property for my Name's sake, they will receive a hundredfold and be given eternal life».

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Fr. Josep ALEGRE Abbot emerit of Santa Maria de Poblet
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Today, in St. Benedict's festivity, the Liturgy of the Word transmits to us Jesus Christ's own words, that should fill us with hope when we leave everything to stay with Him. «Here was a man of venerable life, Benedict by name and grace, who from the time of his very childhood carried the heart of an old man. His demeanor indeed surpassing his age, he gave himself no disport or pleasure, but living here upon earth he despised the world with all the glory thereof, at such time as he might have most freely enjoyed it». This is how St. Gregory the Great starts his introduction of his Life of Our Most Holy Father Saint Benedict. And this is how St. Benedict starts fulfilling the Gospel the Church is proposing us today, in his holiday: to give up everything to follow the Master.

To follow Jesus, we must give up whatever inconsistency to embrace the true wisdom that moves our hearts and opens the doors to immortality; a different wisdom to our worldly wisdom, that closes and hardens the hearts, sentencing them to sterility and death, and makes man unfortunate, for man's heart is meant to live, for God, and can only find rest in the sources of life, in God's embrace.

The way of life chosen by St. Benedict is, therefore, the way that will make us worthy of listening to Jesus' words: «On the Day of Renewal, when the Son of Man sits on his throne in glory, you, too, will sit on twelve thrones...» (Mt 19:28). This new world begins to be hinted by those assuming in their lives the Wisdom of the Kingdom, for they have the divine Spirit that examines everything and discerns God's ways. And thus, becomes worthy of receiving and inheriting eternal life, which is anticipated in this world by following and knowing the Lord Jesus, who clearly affirms: «Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent» (Jn 17:3). This is what St. Benedict did... what about you?