# August 9th: Memorial of Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Patron saint of Europe

**Gospel text (*Mt* 10:28-33):** Jesus said to his apostles: «Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but have no power to kill the soul. Rather be afraid of him who can destroy both body and soul in hell. For only a few cents you can buy two sparrows, yet not one sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's consent. As for you, every hair of your head has been counted. So do not be afraid: you are worth much more than many sparrows. Whoever acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my Father in heaven. Whoever rejects me before others I will reject before my Father in heaven».

***«Do not be afraid»***

Fr. Fidel CATALÁN i Catalán
*(Terrassa, Barcelona, Spain)*

Today, we celebrate the feast of St. Teresia Benedicta a Cruce, Edith Stein, patron saint of Europe. She lived with courage her conversion from Judaism to the Catholic Church, and she also bravely faced her martyrdom during WWII. On various occasions, the Gospel mentions the phrase «do not be afraid». Mostly, in very special moments. As a significant instance, let us just remember the Annunciation to the Mother of God.

This expression is more of a positive exhortation than a negative attitude. Mathew's previously preceding texts (that we have read in the few past days) have shown us the disciples' mission was not without difficulties and persecutions. Today's text is rather an invitation to true hope. The real disciple must be someone bold and intrepid.

Behind these words we can find what the Church has formulated under the name of “saint fear of the Lord”, which is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Today's Gospel presents some characteristics of this gift. They do not quite refer to actual fear, but rather as to how to live our relationship with God.

If He, who is the Father, watches over human beings in a more sublime way than the attentive care He has for birds (cf. Mt 10:29-31), the relationship He establishes with the most excellent creature is even much stronger. The fear of the Lord impels us to live this relation with reverence, with confidence, with the exigency and responsibility of he who knows that Jesus himself will recognize him before the Father.

The true disciple lives encouraged by this relationship that only has a meaning if it is for real. And the true authenticity is measured by its human component for the divine one already abounds in there.

Saints help to express and live this relationship based in their saint fear of the Lord. Today, the remembrance of St. Teresia Benedicta of the Cross makes it evident. She sought it, and once she found it, she remained in this founding relation.