September 5th: Saint Teresa of Calcutta, religious

Gospel text (*Mt* 25:31-40): Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

"Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

Fr. Maxi TRONCOSO Peña
(Tamayo-Barahona, Dominican Republic)

Today and always, this Gospel we contemplate today has a profound relevance. This call, which the Lord will one day make to us, to walk beside Him to inherit the Kingdom of God prepared for us since the creation of the world, continues to be fulfilled. How wonderful! God has always desired this Kingdom for us.

But it seems that it is a kingdom that is not inherited by pure passivity, but rather that it entails the surrender of life in many of the realities that surround us and that so often we also tend to reject because they can disgust us: visiting the sick or the imprisoned; giving food to the hungry or drink to the thirsty; clothing the naked or welcoming the stranger.

The kingdom of heaven is not for the comfortable or the satisfied, but for those who have known how to love their brothers and sisters as their own flesh because they have seen in the face of others the image of Christ who needs it. As Pope Francis affirmed, "To love God and neighbor is not something abstract, but profoundly concrete; it means seeing in every person the face of the Lord to be served, to serve him

concretely." It is Christ we love when we love our brothers and sisters with magnanimous generosity.

The poor are the sign of God's presence among us, since in each one of them it is Christ who makes himself present, says Mother Teresa of Calcutta, whose feast we celebrate today. And that presence, which fills everything, which pervades everything, the divine presence, is palpable in the hungry and the thirsty; in the stranger and the naked; in the sick and the imprisoned. We can say that lovingly embracing another is embracing Christ. This is what the Lord wanted to do, and this is what he reminds us of: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40).