December 3rd: Memorial of Saint Francis Xavier, Priest

Gospel text (*Mk* 16:15-20): Jesus appeared to the Eleven and said to them: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

«In my Name they will speak new languages; they will lay their hands on the sick and they will be healed»

Fr. Eduard MARTÍNEZ Quinto
(Mirasol, Barcelona, Spain)

Today we contemplate the last words of Jesus before returning to the Father. It is the moment before the Ascension. Therefore, those are the last words that the apostles will hear of Jesus Christ in person.

Last words of a person before leaving for another place are so important! They are stored in a preferred place of the heart. Even more so when that person is God Himself becoming man, coming to the world and surrendering himself to death, to free us from evil, sin and from death itself, giving us Life for his Resurrection. How important are those words! Important for who says them: God Himself. Important for his message: the Gospel. Important by the recipient: the whole world.

How well understood these words St. Francis Xavier! This great missionary traveled great distances in India, Japan and other nations, with his heart burning with missionary enthusiasm. Faithfully fulfilling the command of Jesus, he experienced the signs that will accompany his true apostles, as Christ says: "In my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mk 16, 17-18).

Indeed, his preaching and testimony was accompanied by numerous healings of the sick. Crowds also approached him to be baptized. Sometimes, at night, he could not move his right hand because of the

pain, because he had spent the whole day baptizing. In addition, along with many difficulties, he had to learn new languages. What the Gospel tells us today is thus fulfilled.

Through Baptism you and I also receive that message from Jesus that makes us messengers of God, missionary apostles, bearers of the Good News. Keep in your heart the words of Jesus and go without fear on adventure taking the Gospel everywhere.