

Wednesday's Gospel: Being Christ's Disciple

Gospel (*Lk* 14:25-33)

Now great multitudes accompanied Jesus; and he turned and said to them,

“If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has

enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build, and was not able to finish.’

Or what king, going to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace. So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”

Commentary

Jesus is accompanied by many people, and he knows that some of those following him don't do so with good dispositions. Along with those

who have a right intention, others want to experience something extraordinary, to witness a miracle; while others are moved by curiosity or even seek to catch him in a mistake. You and I can ask ourselves how we are following Christ, what moves us to follow him. Do we let ourselves be carried along by routine in fulfilling the rules or obligations we have already incorporated into our schedule; or, on the contrary, are we striving to identify ourselves with Him, with the help of grace?

The only valid reason for following Christ is love, corresponding to his love for us. Today's gospel passage is simply an explanation of the first commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (*Mt 22:37*). Our Lord addresses this commandment of love to everyone; it is valid for all people and for all times. One should be

ready to set aside everything for that love. When God's love truly fills a person's heart, this is easy to understand. "Whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices," as Saint Teresa said.

Such a love is not the result of deep meditation or even continuous acts of the will. It is a gift, a grace that God gives us, to be able to love him with an absolute and unconditional love, which becomes eternal after death. When we respond with our whole being to the God who gives himself to us, we will be able to love people and things as God loves them. But first we have to take that step, the radical dispossession of ourselves, which Jesus teaches us in the Gospel: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (*Mt* 16:24).

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