

Monday's Gospel: Following Jesus Closely

Gospel for Monday in the 13th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 8:18-22*)

When Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side.

And a scribe came up and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.”

Another of the disciples said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.”

Commentary

The crowd is amazed by Jesus' miracles. But our Lord doesn't want to be the center of attention and decides to go to the other side of the Lake. A scribe comes up to Him and say he wants Jesus to be his Teacher. And the scribe receives an unexpected response. The humble Son of man is tirelessly preaching the Kingdom of God and doesn't have his own home. He stays wherever He is well received: in Capernaum, in the house of Peter; in Bethany, in the home of his three friends; in Jerusalem, in the house pointed to by

the anonymous man carrying a jar of water; and He even sleeps in his disciples' boat, in the middle of a storm. Perhaps the scribe thought that following Jesus would be an easier life.

Those who are already following our Lord know what it means not to have time even to eat, until they hear Jesus' invitation to draw aside and rest a little (cf. *Mk* 6:31). Even among his own disciples the conflict arises between following Him and fulfilling the law's command to honor one's parents, to give them a worthy burial (cf. *Ex* 20:12). But no law is above our Lord's command to follow Him to announce salvation, since it is an expression of the highest possible charity towards one's neighbor. Delaying one's response means changing the order of the commandments.

Jesus words are clear: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide” (*Jn* 15:16). He counts on our joyful and determined “yes,” also in this world of ours today so in need of men and women who love it as much as God loved it (cf. *Jn* 3:16). When listening to these words from today’s Gospel, we remember Saint Josemaría’s strong statement: “Bear in mind, my son, that you are not just a soul who has joined other souls in order to do a good thing. This is a lot, but it is still little. You are the Apostle who is carrying out an imperative command from Christ.”^[1]

^[1]Saint Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 942.

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