

Monday's Gospel: "If you would be perfect"

Gospel for Monday in the 20th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 19:16-22*)

One came up to Jesus, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?"

And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which?" And Jesus said, "You shall not kill, You shall not commit

adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

The young man said to him, “All these I have observed; what do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

Commentary

A young man approaches Jesus with an important question: “Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?”

Jesus responds with another question: “Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good.” And Jesus continues: “if you would enter Life, keep the commandments.” And when the young asks, which ones? Jesus replies: “You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Then the conversation takes on a new tone and becomes more personal. The young man tells Jesus that he has kept these commandments since his youth. And he asks: “what do I still lack?”

The Evangelist Saint Mark highlights that Jesus, upon hearing the young man’s response, was moved: “And Jesus looking upon him loved him” (*Mk 10:21*).

Jesus tells him: “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” But the young man went away sad, because he had many possessions.

Jesus does not impose himself. He approaches each person and listens to their concerns, and offers a new perspective on life. He wants to lead us along the path of Love. He wants our life to be entirely a life of Love.

Love grows by fulfilling the commandments, but above all by following Jesus closely: “come, follow me.”

As Saint Josemaría said in one of his homilies: “Following Christ: that is the secret. We must accompany him so closely that we come to live with him, like the first Twelve did; so closely, that we become identified with him. Soon we will be able to say,

provided we haven't put obstacles in the way of grace, that we have put on, have clothed ourselves with our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord is then reflected in our behavior, as in a mirror. If the mirror is as it ought to be it will capture our Savior's most lovable face without distorting it or making a caricature of it; and then other people will have an opportunity of admiring him and following him (*Friends of God* no. 299).

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