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Monday's Gospel: the Banquet of the Kingdom

Gospel for Monday of the 31st Week in Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 14:12-14*)

Jesus said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay

you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

Commentary

In today's Gospel, Jesus uses the image of a banquet to teach us some important truths. The context is a meal on the Sabbath at the home of one of the leading Pharisees. Several doctors of the Law and some Pharisees are upset because Jesus works miracles on the Sabbath. But our Lord is not intimidated. He makes use of the occasion to teach the central role of charity with images like that of the banquet. After explaining the importance of humility, he wants to teach us that humility needs to be accompanied by the practice of charity.

For charity consists in rising above oneself, in always seeking the good of

the other person, in not looking for one's own gain, in rejecting any praise or reward for ourselves.

Charity is loving God and our neighbor as ourselves. To be happy, we need to seek the happiness of our neighbor. Hence Jesus invites us to give to those who cannot return to us the help we give, such as the poor.

When God came into the world he himself became poor. “We are led to this by the love of Christ, who loved us to the extreme (see *Jn* 13:1), with a love that reaches the boundaries, the margins, the existential frontiers.

Bringing the peripheries to the center means focusing our life on Christ, who ‘made Himself poor’ for us, to enrich us ‘by his poverty’ (2 *Cor* 8:9).”^[1] —

To put Christ at the center of our life, we need to discover Christ himself in our neighbor. Saint Josemaría said: “my children, do you know why I

love you so much? Because I see the Blood of Christ flowing in your veins.” We need to see Christ in our neighbor, in the poor. This will move us to carry out specific actions in favor of others.

By accompanying Christ, we start out poor and end up rich. He gives us his heart so that we can take on the concerns of others, so that we can share with them what is our own, the gifts that he has given us. And thus we will be able to travel joyfully through this world with a magnanimous heart.

^[1] Pope Francis, General Audience, 19 August 2020.