

Jesus, the All in All

Gospel: Matthew 10: 32-36, 19:27-30 : *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.*

"Behold, we have forsaken all,
and followed thee"

There is no more suitable and more beautiful expression than proclaiming this after the descent of the Holy Spirit on us last Pentecost Sunday.

This First Sunday after Pentecost, the Church commemorates all the saints. This cloud of Saints proves that Pentecost is a continuous event in History, and that the Holy Spirit is always active. These fruits (the Saints) are the best proof. This is the will of God that we may be holy as He is holy. His will is that we enter into the communion of His holiness.

In the beginning was the Word (Christ) and the Word, the second person, was with (proz) God. The Word was moving towards God. This Word became man. Jesus wanted to have all people move towards God. In other words, he wanted people to share in His glory, the glory that He has in His Father. Jesus came to fulfill the will of the Father, making us sharers in the life of the Holy Trinity, moving in love towards the Father. After His Ascension, Christ sent the Holy Spirit to guide us to the whole truth. The Truth is Christ, and Christ takes us to the Father. The Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost to continue what Jesus has begun to do, that is "to cry in our hearts, Abba, Father." (Galatians 4:6).

Who is then a Saint? He is the one who shouts as the bride and the Spirit to Christ, "Come." You have called us, and we have followed you, as the words in the Book of Revelation (22:17) say. The Saint is the one who moves with longing to love God. The Spirit is the One who initiates the movement and guides us towards this. The descent of the Holy Spirit demands from us to be in a living position described in this most beautiful sentence: "We have forsaken all, and followed thee."

St. John Chrysostom explained this sentence by asking: "What did you forsake, O Peter?!" Didn't Peter leave just his nets and fishing? He was not a rich man and a famous man of this age... This is where we

discover the secret of Peter's sacrifice. He really "forsook" because he turned his love from the world totally to Jesus, even if he gave the widow's mite (by not having a lot of earthly material things to forsake). We forsake everything. It is not important if what we forsake is small or great, but Christ becomes all in all. This is Sainthood.

Sainthood is more than ethical perfection or works of Christian virtues. The latter comes as a result of a heart that loves much. One ought to give to Christ all one's love. This love does not entail deserting or abandoning any other lovers. It however has two characteristics: first, the hierarchy and second, the classification of this love. That's why Christ said, "He that loveth ... more than me is not worthy of me." When Christ is everything for us, then any other love that contradicts His love is rejected. Facing the love of Christ, all love of idols or selfishness is destroyed. At the feet of Jesus, we offer all love with all His lovers. We offer prayer, intercessions, service, and self-sacrifice. Is it not He who commanded us to love one another, as He loved us? From this point of view, the Saint is not the one who just loves Jesus, but also the one who loves everyone in Christ. Every case is an opportunity to demonstrate our love to Jesus, especially if we remember that everything and everyone is also loved by Jesus, and that Christ has put "the other" in our way to hold as our cross or to carry to him the Good News. The Saint is the one who has realized that he is just the apostle of Jesus, and that he ought to love every person, since he knows that every person is loved by God and is sent by Him. Are we parents? Let's love our children till the end. Is there any greater love than directing them towards Jesus. In this way, we continue the work of the Holy Spirit. If we love in our children our own desires more than Jesus, in a way

we did not truly love them, and so we do not deserve the Lord. The Saint is the one who loves God to the point that everything God loves he does as well.

St. Paul the Apostle says in today's Epistle to the Hebrews: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight ... looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1-2). We then shout with all these saints, "Lord, we forsake everything, because we are following you." With the Spirit we, the bride, shout, Lord Jesus Come! Our answer to the call of Jesus ought to be always "Yes."

O Heavenly King, come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, so that we may be with the saints.

Amen.