

## 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall all be yours as well" (Matt. 6:33).

Today's Gospel word continues from last Sunday's event about Jesus' calling of the first apostles and gives us a detailed explanation and application in life. By calling the apostles to be witnesses of God's love, participants in His joy and happiness in heaven, Christ calls each of us to his happiness. The vocation of the first apostles, Peter and Andrew, shows that the initiative for the good and happiness of man comes from God. "So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20).

By the time God was with man, his soul was in a heavenly state of division. Having lost touch with God, he had lost his integrity. The world was divided, and was demonic, disease ridden, insecure, indifferent, and cruel.

Jesus offers his disciples a different path to happiness than the world offers, to seek the first Kingdom of Heaven. Our life in this world is largely connected with the earthly goods that man earns by hard daily work. These goods provide for our life and health. However, these material gifts, of God, are limited in their capabilities and cannot meet all human needs, especially spiritual ones.

Because of the material and spiritual separation, a person loses peace, and is destroyed as a person. Inner anxiety, mental anxiety, constant war with oneself, and one's desires, are the main features of modern man. After all, without God, we lose peace of mind and balance. Whoever wants to build his life with God, under his reliable protection and receive happiness from Him, he must make the Kingdom of Heaven the main goal of his life. In other words, the main task in the life of every Christian is to be with God here and in eternity.

When the disciples once asked the Savior when the kingdom of God would come, He said, "The kingdom of God will come unnoticed; and they will not say, 'Here it is!' Or, 'It is there.' The kingdom of God is where Jesus is, where his love and truth reign among men. There is no love without truth...God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16). Thus, the Kingdom of Heaven, for a Christian, begins here on earth, with good relations with others, filled with the spirit of truth and love.

To seek the Kingdom of God is to seek God, that is, to care first for the good of the soul, because the body will return to the earth after death, and the soul will be with God forever. To seek the Kingdom of Heaven, to care for the good of the soul, means to seek first of all God's values in life; love, mercy, truth, justice, honesty, kindness, and meekness. The Apostle Paul assures us of this, "For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17).

Teaching people about the Kingdom of Heaven, Christ said, "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ...But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matt. 6:31-33). With these words, Jesus offers those who seek true happiness to place all hope in a God who sanctifies man, and not in his own efforts, which cannot guarantee man eternal joy. "...You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).

Note what Sr. Faustina Kowalska said. Jesus spoke to her and she recorded it in her diary. She wrote, "Even if our sins are as black as night, but when a sinner turns to God's mercy, he gives God the greatest glory. His soul glorifies God's goodness. Then Satan trembles before this soul and flees to the very bottom of hell. Remember my Passions, says Jesus, and if you do not believe My words, then look at My wounds. Oh, if you only knew how much I am hurt by distrust of My goodness. The sins of distrust hurt me the most."

Christ also said to Sr. Faustina, write the following words, "Let even the greatest sinners place their hope in My mercy. First of all, they have the right to My mercy, trust, to the abyss of My mercy. The bottom of the greatest evil turns to the abyss of My mercy. Speak of mercy to troubled souls in need. To such souls I give graces beyond their expectations. I can't punish them. I cannot punish anyone, even when it comes to the greatest sinner, when he calls for My mercy. I justify it with incomprehensible mercy." All of these writings indicate that the greater the spiritual poverty of man, the more he has the right to God's mercy. In the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul says, "...where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom. 5:20).

Let us firmly believe in God's mercy and let us not complain, for it can bring us salvation. In God's Providence is all our hope. God's call to "follow me," which was heard along the Sea of Galilee, is heard today in our temples. The Lord calls us Christians to spiritual perfection and eternal bliss. "Come to me, all who that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door," says the Lord, "I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

Let us open our hearts to the Lord!

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