

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Mar 6th 2024

Accompanying in humility

“Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.”
-Matthew 5:19

The theme of both readings of today is the Law. The Lord gives the Law to his people with an attitude of closeness. They are not the prescriptions of a far-away dictator. Our God is the God of nearness, a God who walks with his people and falls in love with his people. Falling in love is a phrase often used to refer to the love between life partners, where the lovers are willing to give in and give up everything else for the beloved. This love and closeness always bring with it some vulnerability.

Pope Francis develops this theme and says, ‘Walking with his people and falling in love with them, God makes Himself vulnerable. The closer He comes, the more vulnerable He seems. When He comes among us, to live with us, He makes himself a man, one of us: he makes himself weak and takes up that weakness to the point of death - the most cruel death, the death of the greatest sinners. He humiliates Himself to be with us, to walk with us, to help us.

How often in life do we simply go through the rituals of being Christians? Sitting in Mass on Sundays, saying a quick prayer at night before falling asleep, giving up sweets or Facebook for Lent without really thinking about what Lent is all about...and these make me feel happy for fulfilling my obligations of a good Christian. Jesus challenges us to move away from our superficialities to fully enter into a relationship with God. Following the commandments and observing the rituals of the Church alone do not make us faithful to Christ.

When I profess to be a Christian but ignore and forget the commandment of Christ to love my fellow brethren, am I not a hypocrite? Christ teaches us to love God through our love and concern for those around us. How often have we ignored them? Our regular attendance to the Sunday liturgy and external displays of religiosity would be a counter witnessing if we move about with a foul mouth, gossiping and deceiving those around us. Have you come across Christians who refuse to go back to the Church because of the anti-witnessing of the regular church-goers who scrupulously follow the rules?

If we want to follow Jesus and lead others towards Jesus, today’s Gospel has a proposal: Be close to our fellow brethren, fall in love with them and be vulnerable and humble. God wants us to accept the life proposal he sets before us and lead others into the same life principles; he wants us to be called the greatest in his Kingdom!

Bible Claret