

7. December 2022

## My burden is light

Mt 11:28-30

*At that time Jesus spoke and said, "Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light."*

What a wonderful invitation the Lord addresses to us! These words of His give us a glimpse into His heart. Also in today's reading, taken from the book of Isaiah, the Lord shows His people how much He cares for them, how He accompanies and sustains them. Thus says the prophet: *"He gives strength to the weary, He strengthens the powerless (...). But those who hope in the Lord will regain their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles, though they run they will not grow weary, though they walk they will never tire"* (Is 40:29,31). The excerpt from Psalm 103 also speaks of God's tenderness and mercy towards us.

How much consolation we can find in these words! God is neither far away nor indifferent to the fate of humankind. Just as He counts day by day the host of stars and calls each one by name (Is 40:16), so He has called us by name and we are His (cf. Is 43:1).

In reality, these considerations should give us great security in our lives, that security that comes from knowing that we are loved, even more so if we know that we can carry all our burdens and labors before Someone who will help us carry them, who will make them more bearable, who will give them meaning and transform them into tasks that are entrusted to us and that have a meaning in the plan of salvation.

Certainly this is one aspect of the rest that the Lord wants to give us: we do not have to face the burdens and fatigues alone, we do not have to fall into the temptation of meaninglessness; but we can be sure that the Lord loves us and accompanies us. He lovingly invites us to enter into a dialogue with Him. Thus we experience that we are

not simply exposed, at the mercy of our weaknesses; but that His most loving and consoling Heart is at our side.

But the Lord's invitation goes further and is not limited to consoling us in our needs. Jesus says again that He wants to give us rest. And on this occasion He speaks of a gentle yoke, referring to the imitation of the meekness and humility of His Heart.

This is the invitation to imitate Christ, in which we can discover the deepest meaning of our existence. And the rest that we will receive by imitating the Lord is of another dimension. It is the serenity or inner peace of being on the path that God has prepared for us. It is the serenity of one who no longer has to keep looking for the narrow door to enter the Kingdom of God, since he has already found the One whom he loves. Thus the words of St. Augustine are fulfilled: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you" (Confessions, I, 1).

Now the yoke of the Lord awaits us, which consists not only in knowing the goodness and humility of His heart, but also in imitating Him, so that our heart may become like His and the virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit may be fully unfolded. We are called to become like Christ!

Many may think that this is a difficult path. But they should keep in mind that it is a path that is traveled in truth and love, and thus introduces us to the essential dimension of our existence. Yes, it is true that we have to leave many things behind, it is true that we have to change, it is true that we have to set aside everything that is opposed to the goodness and humility of the Heart of Jesus... This may seem difficult. But is it not a light and even sweet burden? Is it not our hardness of heart, our pride and our stubbornness that place heavy burdens on us; and not only on us, but also on the people around us?

Jesus offers for us to carry all these burdens before Him and to change through imitating Him, allowing ourselves to be transformed by Him. And then a gentle and light burden awaits us! If we know this infinite love of God and know that He sustains us, will we not feel the "obligation of love" to speak to humanity about this Lord who loves us so tenderly? Will we not thus be participating in that "duty of preaching the Gospel" of which St. Paul speaks? (cf. 1 Cor 9:16) Thus we take upon ourselves the "sweet yoke" of evangelization.

Would there be a better way to thank the Lord than by responding to His invitation to willingly take His gentle yoke upon us? His yoke is gentle and His burden light, because they are founded on truth and love.