



What is Christian poverty?

Virtue or life condition?

Pope Francis is very aware of the issue of poverty and he is constantly reminding us that he wants us to be a poor Church. Understanding poverty as lived and wanted by our Lord Jesus Christ is the first step in being this Church that the pope desires. Although it might seem very simple, the truth is that there is a lot of confusion about what Christian poverty is.

Virtue or Life condition

It is very important to understand that in the Church we speak of **two different types of poverty. There is poverty as a condition that consists of the lack of material goods**, we know that many people suffer it and it is a problem that we must work to solve. This poverty is a bad one. There is nothing positive about material poverty, at best, something positive can be taken from it but it can never be considered a good.

The virtue of poverty is what we value. Christ speaks about spiritual poverty as one that deserves to be rewarded, which is worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt 5-3). This is a life decision, an attitude with which Christ asks us to live in order to reach heaven, does not depend on the economic condition of the family or the country from which we come, it does not depend that we lost everything in a fire or won the lottery and not depends of the capabilities we have to make more or less money. The virtue of poverty, like all virtues, depends on the human will.

The gift of material goods

Does this mean that spiritual poverty requires us to become materially poor on a voluntary form? It seems that many people believe this, perhaps we do not know any person who lives with material deficiencies by the personal decision but we constantly hear how we talk in the Church about living poverty and this makes us

think about material poverty. So, are we Catholics incoherent people?

Is it wrong to have material things?

If God created the sensible world, this cannot be evil, He put us in that world to enjoy His creation. The material world is a gift from God, a means so that we can be happy and we can love Him. The only thing that offends Him is when we put these things before Him and before our brothers. God gives us love, as a mother gives to her children for love, but when a son loves more the gifts than his mother is when the child is rejecting the greatest gift he can receive, he is rejecting the very love of his mother.

Voluntary poverty is not a requirement of Christ or the Church. When Christ speaks of the poverty that we must live, He means that we must live detached from the material, that we give little importance to these things. This lack of interest in the material must arise from a genuine interest in the spiritual and future life in heaven. Who has eyes in heaven do not care about the things that this world can offer but he uses them for what he needs, this is what this virtue is about.

The real poor of spirit do not allow money or any other possession to stand between him and heaven and he does not think twice before deciding to get rid of something material if it causes problems in his relationship with Christ.

The Poverty of Christ

Christ indeed lived with much austerity and this we must take into account, but it is also true that Christ, did not merely cover his basic needs, but gave food to more than five thousand people and "they ate all and were satisfied" (Mt 14 -20), he participated in banquets so the Pharisees criticized him (Mt 11, 19), he did not complain when Mary of Bethany smeared his feet with pure nard (Jn 12, 3) and his first miracle was to turn water into wine at the wedding of Cana (Jn 2, 1-12). From this, we cannot conclude that Christ lived without enjoying material things, let alone think that it is how we should live.

What we see Christ doing is to put all the necessary means to carry out the mission that the Father entrusts to Him and to get rid of anything that might interfere with his mission. This is why Christ leaves home and He is not established in one place but his dedicated to touring cities and towns to spread the good news. Nothing can be interposed between Christ and his mission, neither fatigue, nor fear, nor money. Christ loves the Father and lives for the Father; everything else is in the background.

Blessed are the poor in spirit...

"Blessed are the poor in spirit because of them is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt

5-3).

Finally what this means is that to inherit Heaven you just have to love it, because who wants something dedicates their time and energy to get it. For this reason we ask our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us the virtue of poverty, so that we live day by day with the illusion of striving to reach heaven and when this desire is deeply in our hearts, we will no longer be citizens of the Earth but of the paradise that the Father has prepared for us.

The call of Christ on the Mount of Beatitudes is to identify those things that bind us to the earth and do not allow us to ascend to him and ask ourselves... How would Christ want me to use this? Can I use it to grow in my relationship with God or should I let go and get