



As the disciple before the master, as the child with his mother, so must the Christian be in all occupations before Christ. The son learns to speak by listening to his mother, striving to copy her words. In the same way, watching Jesus work and act, we learn to lead like him.

The Christian life is an imitation of the master's, He became incarnate and gave you an example to follow his footsteps (1). Saint Paul exhorted the first Christians to imitate the Lord with these other words: have the same feelings of Christ Jesus (2). He is the exemplary cause of all holiness, the love of God the Father. And this is not only for his deeds but for his being, for his way of working was the outward expression of his union and love for the Father.

Our holiness does not consist so much in an external imitation of Jesus as in allowing our deepest being to be configured with that of Christ. Get rid of the old man with all his works and dresses of the new man ... (3), encourages St. Paul to the Colossians. This daily renewal means constantly wanting to file our customs, eliminating human and moral flaws of our lives, which is not in conformity with the life of Christ... But above all, to ensure that our feelings before men, before the realities created, before the tribulation, seem more and more like those who had Jesus in similar circumstances, in such a way that our life is in a sense an extension of his, for God has predestined us to be similar to the image of his son (4).

The same divine grace, to the extent that we correspond to the continuous action of the Holy Spirit, makes us similar to God. We will be saints if God the Father, can affirm of us what one day said of Jesus: this is my beloved Son, in whom, I have put my complacency (5). Our holiness will, therefore, consist in being by grace what is Christ by nature: children of God.

The Lord is everything to us. "This tree is for me an eternal plant of salvation; from him, I feed myself, get satisfied. Because of its roots, I am rooted and by its branches I extend, its dew rejoices me and its spirit as delicious wind fertilizes me. In its shadow, I raised my tent, and fleeing the great heats there I find a coat full of dew. Its leaves are my foliage, its fruits my perfect delight, and I freely enjoy its fruits, which were reserved to me from the beginning. He is in hunger my food, in thirst my source, and my dress in nudity, because its leaves are the spirit of life:

Far from me from now the leaves of the fig tree. When I fear God, He is my protection, and when I am empty, my support. When I fight, my prize and when triumph, my trophy. Is for me the narrow path" (6). Nothing I desire out of.

II. The gospel (7) tells us about the request made by James and John to Jesus for two positions of honor- in his kingdom. Afterward, the ten began to get indignant against these two brothers. Jesus then said to them, "You know that those who appear as chiefs of the people oppress them, and the powerful overwhelm them. It must not be like that among you; on the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you, be your servant, and who among you wants to be the first, be a slave of all. And He gives them the supreme reason: for the Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve and to give his life in the redemption of many.

On several occasions, the Lord will proclaim that it did not come to be served but to serve: Non veni ministrari sed ministrare (8). His whole life was a service to all, and his doctrine is a constant call to men to forget themselves and give themselves to others. He constantly traversed the ways of Palestine, serving each one -singulis manus imponens (9)- of those he found in his path. He stayed forever in Church, and in a particular way in the Holy Eucharist, to serve us daily with his company, with his humility, with his grace.

In the night before his Passion and Death, as teaching something of utmost importance, and to be always clear this essential characteristic of the Christian, he washed the feet of his disciples, so that they did also the same (10).

The Church, continuing the salvific mission of Christ in the world, has as its main task to serve men, for the preaching of the divine word and the celebration of the sacraments. Moreover, "taking part in the best aspirations of men and suffering by not seeing them satisfied, wants to help them to achieve their full development, and this precisely because it proposes to them what it possesses as its own: a global vision of man and humanity" (11).

Christians, who want to imitate the Lord, have to be prepared for joyful service to God and others, without expecting anything in return. Serve even the one who does not appreciate the service that is lent. Sometimes many will not understand this cheerful disposition attitude. It will be enough for us to know that Christ does understand it and welcomes us then as true disciples of his. The "pride" of the Christian will be precisely this: to serve as the Master did. But we only learn to give ourselves, to be available, when we are close to Jesus. "As you undertake each day to work together with Christ, and attend to so many souls who seek you, convince yourself that there is only one way: to go to the Lord.

"Only in prayer, and with prayer, do we learn to serve others!" (12). From it, we obtain the forces and humility that every service requires.

III. Our service to God and others must be full of humility, even if we ever have the honor of bringing Christ to others, such as the donkey on which he entered triumphantly in Jerusalem (13). Then more than ever we have to be willing to rectify the intention, if necessary. "When they give me a compliment," writes the one who would later be John Paul I, "I need to compare myself to the donkey that

was brought to Christ on Palm Day. And I say to myself: "How would they have laughed at the donkey if, listening to the crowd's applause, he had become proud and had started -as it was- to give thanks to the right and left! ... Do not go to make similar ridicule ...!" (14), warns us.

This availability towards the needs of others will lead us to help other people in such a way that, whenever possible, they are not warned, and so they cannot give us any reward in return. Jesus' Gaze on our life is enough for us. That's enough reward!

Cheerful service, as the Holy Scripture recommends to us: Serve the Lord with joy (15), especially in those works of daily coexistence that may be more annoying or ungrateful and often the most necessary. Life is made up of a series of daily mutual services. We strive to exceed this availability, with joy, with a desire to be useful. We will find many occasions in the profession, during work, in family life..., with relatives, friends, acquaintances, and also with people that we will never see again.

When we are generous in this surrender to others, without walking too steeply if they will appreciate it or not, if they have deserved... We understand that "to serve is to reign" (16).

Let us Learn from our Lady to be useful to others, to think of their needs, to make life easier for them here on earth, and their way to heaven. She gives us an example: -In the joy of the feast, in Cana, only Mary notices the lack of wine ... Even the smallest details of service reach the soul if, like her, it is passionately lived pending of the neighbor, for God- (17). Then we find Jesus very easily, who meets us and tells us: what you did to one of these my younger brothers, you did it to me (18).

1. 1. 1 Pdr 2, 21.
2. 2. Flp 2, 5.
3. 3. Col 3, 9.
4. 4. Rom 8, 29.
5. 5. Mt 3, 17.
6. 6. SAN HIPÓLITO, Homilía Pascual
7. 7. Mc 10, 35-45.
8. 8. Mt 20, 8.
9. 9. Lc 4, 40.
10. 10. Cfr. Jn 13, 4 ss.
11. 11. PABLO VI, Ene. Populorum progressio, 26-III-1967,
12. 12. J. ESCRIVÁ DE BALAGUER, Forja, n. 72.
13. 13. Cfr. Lc 19, 35.
14. 14. LUCIANI, Ilustrísimos señores, p. 59.
15. 15. Sal 99, 2.
16. 16. Cfr. JUAN PABLO II, Enc. Redemptor hominis, 4-III-1979, 21.

17. 17. J. ESCRIVÁ DE BALAGUER, Surco, n. 631.
18. 18. Mt 25, 40.

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