

LOVING JESUS AND TAKING UP THE CROSS...

Happy Sunday to all!

We have gathered in the house of God to listen to his word and be nourished by it. Clearly, the word of God is a source of joy and peace; but on this occasion, Jesus' words cause us some discomfort when we hear him say: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."

These words are not an invitation to despise our loved ones; Jesus is not going against the commandments, nor is he promoting a divisive fanaticism.

Jesus' proposal is to love God above all things.

In the words of the Apostle Saint Paul, the truth of the Gospel is a sword that cuts away what hinders our growth.

When the Gospel enters a person's life, it necessarily transforms us and helps us make new decisions for our lives.

Jesus' words comfort us, but they also challenge us; they embrace us, but they also demand; they heal us, but they also purify us.

That is why Jesus invites us to discover the primacy of God's love, which is summarized in the first commandment: to love God above all things. Jesus does not come to destroy family ties or bonds. He strengthens and sanctifies them, but he helps us understand that no human reality can be above God's love, making it absolute.

Therefore, this invitation is linked to carrying our daily cross, and Jesus does not reduce the cross to illness, suffering, or physical affliction;

rather, he means the cross that involves following his word, being faithful to Christ and his teachings.

Why is it that so often in our daily lives we seek to please others, to avoid upsetting people, to appease them, etc., forgetting our Gospel principles? But Jesus invites us to embrace the logic of the Gospel, which doesn't seek confrontation, but rather to go against the grain: living in the truth of Christ, his teachings, and his demands.

When I place God at the center of my heart, he becomes the axis of my decisions, and therefore of my actions.

For this reason, we should ask ourselves: Who occupies first place in my heart? Who or what determines my decisions? Each of us has the answer.

Finally, Jesus helps us understand that when we choose God, his cause, and the Gospel, we will also be rewarded. He invites us to solidarity with those most in need, without excluding his ministers or messengers who help us receive his message of salvation. Therefore, in the first reading, the woman who showed solidarity with the prophet Elisha was rewarded. The Gospel of Matthew tells us, "Whoever gives even a cup of water to these little ones because they are my disciples will certainly not lose their reward."

Faith always involves commitment; faith in Jesus transforms the heart. And it helps us to be instruments of blessing for others.

May Our Lady of Heaven, full of grace, help us to receive this invitation with peace and love. Amen.