

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

WELCOMING AND GOD'S HOSPITALITY



In this Sunday's Gospel, Christ speaks powerful words to us. We find three essential elements: welcoming others, our loyal attachment to Jesus, and our role as ambassadors of Christ. Preferring Christ does not mean we should not love our loved ones. What He expects of us is that we give Him first place. **When Christ holds priority in our lives, He becomes Our model. We, too, can love others increasingly in the way Jesus does.** When an engaged couple decides to unite for life, it does not mean they are turning their backs on their families, parents, or friends. It is the same with our relationship with Christ: preferring Him enables us to love others truly. **He Himself instructs us to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbor as ourselves.**

When Saint Matthew wrote this Gospel, he was addressing believers who faced a difficult choice in their journey of conversion. Of course, they rejoiced in embracing Christ; yet, at the same time, they were misunderstood and rejected by their own families. That rejection could even escalate to persecution. Yet, despite the threats, many chose to remain faithful to their commitment to Christ.

As we listen to this passage from the Word of God, we come to understand that welcoming another person means listening to their confidences and sharing in their joys and sorrows. What matters is not quantity or luxury, but the quality of the welcome. **As Christians, we have learned and experienced that in the people we meet, God is present; it is He whom we welcome or refuse to welcome.** Let us not forget it is by the quality of our love and hospitality that we will be recognized as disciples of Christ. Welcoming Christ and remaining devoted to Him impel us toward missionary commitment. **Jesus, who calls us all to follow Him, is not merely one teacher among many; He is the Son of God who "came to seek and to save the lost."** We are sent to bear witness through our lives and our words to the One who dwells within us. We help build the new world that Jesus calls the Kingdom of God; in this Kingdom, listening to others, mutual aid, solidarity, supporting one another, and visiting the sick are priorities.

Jesus Himself tells us: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me" (Mt 25:40). This Sunday, we are gathered for the Eucharist; it is God Who welcomes us into His house. He invites us to His feast. And at the end of every Mass, He sends us out to bear witness in the world to this freely given love that is always offered. **Let us continue to live God's generosity that reflects a warmth radiating from the very Love of God.**

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