The Reflection from Pastor Fr. John Carlos, Holy Cross Church, Harrison, NJ, September 4, 2022

THE GREATER GOOD

This Sunday's Gospel speaks to us in a particular way about the demands of living as disciples of Jesus, that is, in dependence and imitation of the One we follow.

Jesus presents himself to those who want to follow him as "the greater good" for which all "lesser goods" must be refused. In fact, if we read the Gospel carefully, we see that none of what Jesus requires of his disciples to "leave behind" in order to follow him freely is evil in itself.

On the contrary, all that Jesus refers to are good things. However, precisely because they are good, we run the risk of being trapped in them, leaving no "space" in our hearts for Jesus to come and occupy the center of our lives.

What "goods" have I already given up to "be a disciple of Jesus"?

What are the "goods" that I am still "not able to give up" in order to have a free heart for Him?

In your service, prayerfully,

Father John Carlos

常年期第二十三主日 (9/4/2022)

今天是常年期第二十三主日。在今天的福音中,主耶稣基督对我们提出严格,甚至听起来很极端的要求:谁不"恼恨"自己的父母家人,就不能做基督的门徒;谁不背起自己的十字架跟随祂,就不能做祂的门徒。对基督的第二个要求,我们常挂在嘴边,似乎能理解。但让我们去"恼恨"自己最亲爱的家人,岂不是有些"过分"?耶稣与我们立的新的盟约就是爱的盟约,爱天主,爱近人,孝敬父母亲。今天福音中的第一要求"恼恨父母"及家人,是不是与耶稣和我们所立的爱的盟约有矛盾了?

答案是一点儿也不矛盾。实际上主耶稣抨击法利塞人利用 法律上的漏洞去为不孝顺父母找托词(谷 7: 11-13)。圣 保禄宗徒也谴责那些不孝之人:【不照顾自己的戚族,尤 其不照顾自己的家人,即是背弃信德,比不信的人更 坏。】(弟前 5: 8)因此我们知道在一般情形下,热爱父 母及家人是天主的诫命。但当跟随基督与父母家人发生冲 突时,或在爱耶稣和爱家人中做抉择取舍时,主耶稣要求 我们选择跟随他 – 这是我们得到救赎和获得永恒生命的必 备条件和必经之路。原来跟随主耶稣基督是如此重要,那 耶稣在今日福音中的"苛刻"要求还"过分"吗?耶稣的要求就是不要把父母家人,或自认为属世最珍贵的东西放在天主之上,以免错过救灵机会。

我们每一位兄弟姐妹在内心深处都有我们属世上最"珍贵"的东西,只有我们自己清楚。这些"珍贵"的东西可能会成为我们进天国的巨大包袱,进天国"窄门"的时候会被卡住。力气不够的话,进"窄门"时不仅"包袱"甩不掉,而且拖累自己也进不去。

我们需要审视什么是我们生命中最珍贵的?跟随主耶稣,父母家人的亲情,生活所需。实际上天主要求我们按照优先顺序而兼顾:爱天主,爱近人,孝敬父母,勤劳而不贪。