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HELPING THE WEAKEST!



By Bro MARIANO DIVITO, OFM CAP.

The Gospel of St. Mathew, before the narration of the Passion (Mt 26-28) gives us the well-known description of the final judgment: "Then the king will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry..., I was thirsty..., a stranger..., naked..., ill..., in prison...'" (Mt 25, 34-36). This was not just some literary predilection of the Evangelist to describe in a forceful and expressive way the end of human history and "completion" of the Lord's work of salvation, but rather the key to understanding the whole of the Gospel Good News. The Evangelist is more or less telling us that it is from here that we must begin to read the Gospel, because the basis and goal of the whole of Christ's mission and, hence of the Church, the sacramental sign of His salvation, is that we acknowledge Christ as the

Lord when He comes in His glory (Mt 25,31), who was sent by God in the fullness of time (Gal 4,4) and continues to always come down from heaven to be with the suffering members of humanity (Mt 25, 33ff).

In the past, and today, many men and women of different faiths, as well as non-believers and agnostics have fought and given their lives to the great ideals of peace, justice, liberty and tolerance... These are splendid ideals but that have been variously interpreted in ways that have often resulted in tragedies. It is necessary that we contribute to these ideals that they may become a reality, but we must follow that 'royal road' shown to us in the Gospel, that begins with the weakest!

This commitment is fundamental and obligatory to our Christian vocation and for the credibility of our testimony. This is not about ideologies and social policies, but, on the contrary, about our integrity and answering to those cries coming from those too many places in the world, those too many men and

women who have been marginalised, if not totally excluded, from the progress and prosperity of our world that, despite the inequalities, is still astonishing.

The birth and descent of the Child Jesus from heaven on the night of Christmas, and which we proclaim every Sunday in the Creed: "Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven..." was not some symbolical or isolated action, but is the very mission and nature of the Son of God "who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God... Rather, He emptied Himself, ... He humbled Himself" (Phil 2, 6ff.).

This "descending," "emptying" and "humbling" of Himself is most certainly the most important and necessary lesson to all Christians. It can be practised always and everywhere in our actions and silent prayers to God.

We can learn from Padre Pio! On his knees before the crib, he would pray and meditate on the humility of the Son of God. His heart would melt and his eyes fill with tears and with his whole heart and soul he would give himself to his brothers and sisters in their physical and spiritual suffering.

Let us, this Christmas, read and meditate on these last chapters of St. Matthew (26-28), looking within our souls and to the world around us. We will see the world with the eyes of Jesus, with the eyes of the weakest!

A very happy and holy Christmas to everyone!

Fr. Mariano Divito