

Thy Kingdom Come!

[translated from the Spanish original]

Rome, November 16, 2014

To the members of Regnum Christi
on the occasion of the Solemnity of Christ the King

Dear friends in Christ,

I send you greetings and the assurance of my prayers as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King. As we celebrate the kingship of Christ we discover the way in which God the Father works. He governs all things with justice and, above all, with love. We acknowledge with gratitude his great mercy in giving us his Son, crucified and crowned with thorns, with a heart open and wounded for love for us.

The Gospel for the feast day (see Mt 25:31-46) emphasizes the universal kingship of Christ, to whom all power in heaven and on earth has been granted. It reminds us of the truth of our ultimate destiny as well as the criterion by which we shall be judged: the love of our neighbor. Christ's Kingdom becomes established in this world when we open ourselves to the sovereignty of Christ who is gentle and humble of heart, and who did not come to be served but to serve; and when we serve one another with humility as he did. On the other hand, when we pursue only our own selfish interests, we make the world a cold, dark and lonely place.

From the cross Christ reigns in suffering and in pain. The author of the letter to the Hebrews expresses this mystery of the history of salvation with a phrase that we can only understand by meditating upon it: *without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness* (Heb 9:22).

The reality of trials and suffering

Struggle and suffering are an unavoidable part of our human existence. Everyone has to deal with them in some way. I have recently asked myself why some people can maintain an inner joy and hope in the midst of trials while others succumb when faced with discouragement, darkness, emptiness, even to the point of falling into some form of depression.

I believe that when trials and struggles touch our lives, the superficial sources of security crumble and we feel the need for the solid certitudes of faith which could give us the support we need. In these moments the Lord wants to teach us the art of building our life on the Rock, that is, on Christ himself.

Fixing our gaze on Christ the King

From the beginning of his pontificate Pope Francis has insisted, in a special way, on the urgent need to encounter Christ in a personal way. He has reminded us that we have to allow ourselves to be caressed by the Lord's unconditional love and tenderness, and to feel him accompanying us in the midst of all our difficulties. Only the one who has experienced, in faith, the personal love of Christ can live out the moral and existential demands of life with Gospel joy.

In this regard, I wish to recall the words of Blessed Paul VI which make up part of the Regnum Christi welcoming ceremony: *“Christ is the very height of human aspirations; He is the object of our hopes and prayers. He confers meaning on human events. He gives value to human actions. He is the joy and fullness of every heart: He is true Man. And at the same time, Jesus is the well-spring of our true happiness: He is the origin of our spiritual and moral life; He says what has to be done and gives us the strength and grace to do it. For us, Christ is everything. To recognize, proclaim and celebrate this is a duty required by faith and a deep need of our human consciousness. Our destiny, our very salvation is tied to Christ.”*

The certainty which faith in Jesus Christ gives us, makes it possible to face the trials of this life with serenity and to make our sufferings fruitful by letting them be transformed into moments of grace. In order to make headway and help others to journey through life anchored in a faith that will never let us down, we have to discover the grandeur of Jesus, his presence as a friend, his unconditional love. We have to forget about ourselves and give of ourselves to our neighbor without limits. In this way we make the Kingdom of Christ present in the world.

Allowing ourselves to be transformed by hope

Saint Augustine affirmed that we Christians do not suffer less than others but in fact a bit more, because to live by faith is to confront life and history on a deeper level. Yet, the experience of suffering helps us to appreciate life in all its beauty. It like those people who appear to have nothing, but who are rich in faith and who live with a joyful realism we would all love to have.

Hence, in Christ the King we discover the total fulfillment of our life. He chose to take upon himself all our sufferings and sins. He makes all things new and leads us into an ongoing transformation of our hearts and of society. The scars from the battle of being faithful and from being apostles, even the wounds of sin, are changed by God's mercy into “blessed wounds” of hope and salvation.

Dear members of Regnum Christi, I invite you to never falter on the journey of life, especially in the face of the suffering which arises from one's own limitations or from those of others. Christ invites us to lay them at the foot of the cross so as to enter into the interior transformation wrought by grace. We must urgently come out of ourselves and announce to the world the wonder of that faith which finds its concrete expression in charity, in apostolate and in caring for those most in need. When we focus on Christ's wounds instead of our own, we experience true love and hope.

On this Solemnity of Christ the King I invite you to discover anew that the sufferings that we bear in order to follow Christ more closely *are as nothing compared to the glory to be revealed for us* (Rom 8:18). When we feel the cross wounding us, let us unite ourselves to Christ, who offered the entire world to the Father; let us renew our confidence in the Lord; let us proclaim, more with our life than with our words, *"Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever. Amen."*

Be assured of my prayers on the solemnity of Christ the King. Let us remember Father Miguel Romeo, LC, in our prayers. He died two days ago in an accident. Let us also remember all the other Legionaries and members of Regnum Christi who have departed for our Father's house in this past year. I also ask that you remember me in your prayers.

Yours in Christ,

Father Eduardo Robles-Gil, LC
General Director