**04 SEPTEMBER – XXIII SUNDAY O.T. [C]**

**If any one comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.**

**The discipleship of Jesus rests on some rules that can never be transgressed. If one observes them, one is his disciples. If one does not observe them, one is not his disciple. Since these rules are dictated by Christ the Lord, the one who asks a person to observe these rules cannot be accused neither of strictness, not of fundamentalism, nor of traditionalism and not even to deprive the heart of the joy. It is not the one who remembers them who writes the rules. If the one who remembers them wrote them, he might be accused of every accusation, even the most infamous one. Instead, the one who has written the rules is Christ the Lord and we cannot certainly accuse Jesus to be with a strict moral. Neither can we accuse Him of exorbitant demands since He ask to love Him more than one loves the father, the mother, the wife, the children, the sisters and even his own life to be his disciples. In order to love Jesus one must be willing to the martyrdom not when the martyrdom comes, but when choosing Jesus and of being his disciples.**

**Another necessary rule to be his disciples is that everyone takes his own cross and follow Him. What does following Him mean? It means that he walks toward the full obedience, the full self-empting, the total annihilation of oneself to give the greatest glory to his Father. If we deny ourselves until the death to give Christ the glory, we can be his disciples. This is not a strict moral. It is not fundamentalism. It is not traditionalism. It is not to ask for the impossible. Because the one who asks for these things is the One who has given his life for us. He has loved us until the total gift of himself and He has done it as Crucified.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 14,25-33**

**Great crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and addressed them, "If any one comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work the onlookers should laugh at him and say, 'This one began to build but did not have the resources to finish.' Or what king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops? But if not, while he is still far away, he will send a delegation to ask for peace terms. In the same way, everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.**

**Every man is asked to ponder his choice well. Whoever decides to follow Christ Jesus must first sit, measure his will, verify his decision, fathom his heart, assay his soul. If he ascertains that he is capable of following Jesus until the martyrdom, he may take the decision to follow Him. Instead, if he realizes that the discipleship is not for him, it is better not to begin it, instead of interrupting and going back, once begun. The discipleship of Jesus is a serious matter. It forces to the observance of all rules. If a person does not want to observe the rules dictated by Jesus, he does not even want to be his disciple. If he does not want to be his disciple, then it is better not to begin to follow Him, either. This Word of Jesus says to us that almost all our speeches of the Christian about the “Christian nature” are false, deceitful, liar. They are speeches that find the foundation in our flesh and not in the Holy Spirit instead. How can one state that one is strict if one gives man the rules that Christ Jesus has dictated for the one willing to follow Him? How can one accuse to be fundamentalists if one teaches the Gospel preached and lived by Jesus? How can one accuse of moralism the one who, preaching the Gospel, reminds the moral needs of it? The Gospel is moral. Rather, it is most high moral.**

**Every false accusation against those who faithfully preach the Gospel arises from a mind that is still governed by the flesh. Instead, the one who is governed by the Holy Spirit, with his wisdom, always knows how to introduce the Gospel to every man. He also knows how to lead the ewes little by little and to carry the lambs on his shoulders. But all of this is possible only for the one who is governed by the Holy Spirit and is not under the regime of flesh. The one who is responsible of being vigilant so that the Gospel is announced in the purity of its light and of its truth, also moral light and truth, when he speaks to the others, he is always obliged to speak with the Holy Spirit in his heart. If he speaks by arm, by feeling, by the thoughts of his mind, the evil he generates are extremely incalculable. Instead of correcting the mistakes, there is the risk to damage the Gospel in a very serious way. This is what is happening nowadays. Willing to take away the dust from the Gospel, one throws the entire Gospel in the fire. Certainly, the dust is taken away. But at what cost? At the cost of having reduced the entire Gospel into ash and dust. It is a great foolishness. Whoever speaks from the Gospel must always speak with words of God, words of the Holy Spirit, words of great light. May the Mother of God ensure that all the ministries of the Gospel speak from the heart of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel will shine with divine wisdom and will convert the hearts.**