

Friday of the 15th Week of the Year – Our Lady of Dallas, July 19, 2019 Colloquium on the *Carta Caritatis*

Gospel: Matthew 12:1–8

“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

The Sabbath, in sacred Scripture, is the day of fulfillment, the day on which man, created by God, can stop face to face with his Creator, and discover that this relationship of love with the Lord is the supreme goal of his existence.

By calling himself the “Lord of the Sabbath,” Jesus proclaims himself as the One in whom man finds his fulfillment, the fullness for which he is created. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the ultimate and complete happiness of our life. In Him the heart of man finds rest, finds peace.

Our every work, our every mission and vocation, the whole effort of our Christian life, and of our monastic life, makes no sense except in the “Sabbath” of Christ’s communion. If we do not reach our heart’s *rest* and the *rest* of our life in Christ, our every effort, every rule, every asceticism, every sacrifice, would be vain. It would be as if the whole of creation had stopped at the sixth day. On the sixth day, God created man and woman; but it is on the sabbath that the ultimate meaning of human life became an experience of man’s rest in God’s rest, an experience of man’s peace in God’s peace.

Original sin ruined man’s rest in communion with his Lord. God, who walks calmly in the peace of the garden in which creation was completed to welcome man, realizes that man no longer wants to encounter Him in that peace. He realizes that sinful man no longer wants to rest his heart in friendship with Him.

Then God begins a new work, the work of the Redemption accomplished by the Son. Jesus will carry it out to the very end, to the point of resting in man’s death on the holy Sabbath. And it is precisely in this “Sabbath,” in God’s rest in the death of sinful man, that Christ discovers Adam, in the depth of hell, and takes him back to rest with Him in Paradise.

Jesus reveals to the Pharisees the profound secret of man’s new and definitive rest in his Lord: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.”

The mercy of the One who is Crucified is the new Sabbath of which Christ is Lord. In the mercy of God man finds his rest, his peace, the fulfillment he lost by sin. Christ’s mercy is our peace—peace with God, peace with ourselves, peace with everyone.

We have meditated on this in these days by listening together to the *Carta Caritatis* of our Cistercian fathers. They ask us to meet together to renew among us the “*bonum pacis et caritatis* – the good of peace and charity” (CC 7).

Only God’s mercy can renew, among us and with all, the peace of love and the love of peace—that is, the presence of the Risen One who appears in our midst, showing us his transfixed Heart.

And when we experience this, we realize with amazement and gratitude that this alone is the Cistercians’ charism, like the whole Church’s charism, to which the Lord calls us to be faithful not by making sacrifices but by incarnating and radiating His mercy.

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