

Be among those who come to adore Him

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“The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matt 23:11-12). As Jesus speaks those words to us today, He speaks to us of the call that all of us have received. Each and every human being is created in the image and likeness of God. That is true for every one of you. Each of you has been made for God, whether or not you are aware of it. That is the truth of the dignity of the human person. Every human being is created in the image and likeness of God, to be in relationship with God. We see that within our readings today.

In the first reading from the book of Ruth, we read that Ruth gives up her people, her gods, everything, to follow Naomi. She was married to Naomi’s son. Naomi had two sons, both of whom died. One of Naomi’s daughters-in-law, Orpah, went back to her people, but Ruth stayed with Naomi. Ruth gave up everything and that is why Boaz took Ruth as his wife. Listen to his words, “I have had a complete account of what you have done for your mother-in-law after your husband’s death; you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know previously” (Ruth 2:11). She literally gives up everything because of her love. She is a servant and she surrenders everything, not knowing what it is going to bring, not knowing what is going to happen her, and not even knowing that she will be in the line of Jesus. That is how God rewards her humility -- that she becomes one of the ancestors of our Lord. We see too, within the call in the Gospel, that we are all to be servants, to be those people who give ourselves to the Lord.

The theme of this World Youth Day is “we have come to worship Him.” We have come to adore Jesus. Look at the three wise men. They leave everything to follow a star. Essentially they see a star in the sky and they say, “Someone great has been born.” They follow that star until they come to Bethlehem, to the house of bread. There are all sorts of connections that can be made to the bread

of life, our Lord in the Eucharist. They come to worship. They come to adore. That is why everywhere, in the churches you have visited here in Germany, you have found Eucharistic adoration. It is to remind us of Bethlehem, of the beginning, of the house of bread, of the true bread -- Jesus Christ.

My dearest young people, it is important for you to enter into a relationship with Jesus. Ruth gave up everything because of her relationship with her mother-in-law and, turning to the true God, she gave up everything to follow the Lord and to listen to His voice. The three wise men did the same thing: they listened to the Lord. They followed Him and entered into a relationship with Him. The same is true for each one of you. Each one of you is called to be in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, to know him as your friend, your brother, your Lord and Savior, the one who has died for your sins. There is no one who will love you more than Jesus Christ, no other human person: your parents, your grandparents, your brothers, your sisters, your close friends. They all love you, but not with the eternal love of Christ. It is that eternal love that has brought us together. It is the eternal love that continues to keep us together.

In responding to that call, the Lord has many walks of life for us. He calls us in very different ways to follow Him and to be faithful to Him. The most important is, first of all, to have that communion with Jesus Christ, to love Him and to walk always in His light, to be obedient to the commandments. Oftentimes when we listen to the commandments, we hear the "do nots" -- "do not steal," "do not kill," "do not commit adultery," all of the "do nots." But what is behind the "do nots"? Behind the "do nots" is the love of God and the dignity of the human person. Why don't I steal from that person next to me, or the person on the street? Because they are created in the image and likeness of God. Why do I not kill somebody, an innocent person? Because they are created in the image and likeness of God. Why do I wait until marriage in order to have sexual intimacy? Because that man or that woman is created in the image and likeness of God. It is all about the dignity of the human person, and the commandments reveal that dignity to us. The commandments reveal to us the greater good, Jesus, to which we are called.

As you serve the Lord, He may plan for some of you to be married, He may plan for some of you to be religious, He may plan for some of the young men to be priests. The important thing is to surrender to that call and become a servant to the Lord. Ask the Lord to grant you knowledge to answer the question, "How do you want me to serve you, Lord? How do you want me to be your servant?" Do not be afraid of the call, because the Lord will give you every grace you need for that call. Look at the grace He gave to Ruth. Look at the grace He gave to the three wise men. Look at

the grace He gave to someone like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, now Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, or the grace He gave to John Paul II. Against tremendous odds, all of these people responded to a call.

Yesterday when our Holy Father, Benedict XVI, met with the seminarians, there were three testimonies from young men who responded to the call to the priesthood. They were wonderful testimonies. One young man was an engineer for 10 years. He fought the call, but finally surrendered at the age of 35. He still has another five years to go before he will be ordained a priest. The other was a priest ordained in 2001 who grew up in Uzbekistan and was raised as an atheist. He never believed in God. But he became frustrated and went to his grandmother. She taught him the Our Father and the Hail Mary and told him to “pray even though you do not believe in God”; and he embraced God and then heard the call to priesthood. Now he is a priest. He is a wonderful witness of what it means to be a servant. The last testimony was given by a man who was a hunter and a fisherman, and who was interested in chemistry and all of the sciences. He is now the Cardinal Archbishop of Quebec. He responded to the call of God.

And so, my young people, if you respond to the call and to the grace that God is giving to you and listen to His voice, you will discern whether the life you are called to is the married life, the consecrated single life, the consecrated religious life, or, for some of the young men, the priestly life. But in whatever walk of life God is calling you to, the important thing is to be His servant, to walk in His light, and to live humbly; to truly be totally dependent on God for all.

As we continue with our celebration of the Eucharist this morning, let us remember what nourishes us most fully in our relationship with the Lord. Our Lord in his humility, the servant of all servants, gives himself to us in this great mystery of the Eucharist, in this bread that truly becomes his body, blood, soul and divinity. Have you ever thought about the humility of Jesus to identify himself completely with the species of bread and wine? “This is my body given for you.” “This is my blood poured out for you.” He calls us into intimacy and into relationship with Him. That is how much He loves us. That is how much He loves each one of you. He knows you better than you know yourselves. So let us ask the Lord to help us to be His servants. Let us ask Him to help us to always walk in His light so that we may, each day, be among those who come to adore Him.