

INVITATION

«The kingdom of heaven
is like a net
which was thrown into the sea
and gathered fish of every kind;
when it was full,
men drew it ashore
and sat down
and sorted the good into vessels
but threw away the bad.»
(Mt 13:47-48)



Cover of the first Spanish edition

The Christian who does not live the Gospel is like a fish out of water – he will not be able to “live” for long.

The *only positive thing* for God is the Gospel – *the denial of self* – for this is the life of His Son on earth, and the kingdom of God comes about as a *consequence* of “*living*” *the Gospel*.

No soul can enter into the kingdom of God except by virtue of *living* the Gospel – *the denial of self*; if he does not live it *totally* here on earth, he will have to “live” it in Purgatory.

A Christian is not one who receives baptism only but one who *lives* the life of Christ – *the denial of self*.

Religious Orders today are like dry ponds where there remain only a few “puddles of water” in which a few little fish are in their “death throes”; it is for these who have not

yet died that the Lord extends His call:

«The time is fulfilled,
and
the Kingdom of God is at hand;
repent,
and believe in the gospel.»

(Mk 1:15)

His call also reaches out to all souls of “good will” who suffer “hunger and thirst” for Truth, Justice, and Love.

San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy
April, 1966

the slave of the Lord

PRESENTATION

The history of Christianity is the story of how men have responded to the absolute demands of the Gospel. And with the unfolding of this story, it would seem as if there had been a watering down of the Gospel's power to transform Christians and that the latter have accommodated themselves more and more to the spirit of the world. Thus the urgency that was felt by the contemporaries of the Apostles regarding the Lord's coming, and which led them to consider this coming as imminent, has become for

us today an incomprehensible matter, and we try to explain it away as an error in their time perspective. The reason for this is that, to us, faith's view of the world lacks reality.

Among the purest and most vigorous stands taken against this adapting to the spirit of the world, we find that of Francis of Assisi, a stand he proclaimed with his life. When one speaks of the Gospel as a way of life, it is indispensable to mention this voice of protest that arose with Francis, because this voice is still present and resounds among men even today.

The Rule given by St. Francis begins with this synopsis: *« The rule and life of the Friars Minor is this: to observe the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of their own, and in chastity, »* a synopsis which Francis would often repeat, recapitulating it in an even shorter phrase: *« Live the Gospel. »*

Francis has represented an attempt on God's part to bring the world back to the purity of the Gospel, but even this attempt has failed and is the doing of the very ones who claimed to be following him the closest. Without perhaps being aware of this, and while they thought they were ensuring the purity of the Gospel, they have reduced it to a form of religious life that is more or less like all the others. The "Rule" has represented the effort to interpret that initial attempt to return to that purity, but the end result has been that the Gospel is all but forgotten. It certainly seems that Francis would never have wanted to leave, to those who wanted to listen to him and follow him, any rule other than the Gospel. To him the only thing that mattered was the observance of the Gospel to the letter, and he sustained his requirement by saying: *« The most High God Himself has revealed to me that I must live according to the form of the Holy Gospel. »*

It is truly surprising that Francis, as an explanation and justification of his way of living “according to the holy Gospel” – something that Christ has commanded for everyone – should have had to appeal to a personal revelation that required this of him. To us, today, because of our lack of faith, as well as our lack of knowledge regarding the ways of the Spirit, the living of the Gospel seems meaningless. To try to understand it, whether we focus our attention on the situation of that time or on that of today, we must remember what the Gospel has been reduced to in our everyday living, then as well as now. The Gospel was not rejected, it is true, but neither did it have any influence on one’s life. Francis certainly felt called to make the Gospel his life, and this was so new that, as he himself says, it had to be made known to him by means of a divine intervention.

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The explanation of the Gospel in all its purity – which the Lord has given us here – makes us understand not only why a personal revelation became necessary for Francis, calling him to live according to the Gospel, but why a similar intervention has also become necessary for us. As a matter of fact, even if we believed that we were following Francis by taking seriously his invitation to live the Gospel (very often with the conviction that we were actually doing so), in reality what we were following was an “interpretation” in which the Gospel had been all but forgotten. To be able to free ourselves from the condition into which we had fallen, we truly needed an intervention from on High which would come to remind us of the one and only thing that is truly necessary.

And in presenting this book I am giving my testimony that this divine intervention has taken place.

But even more directly a testimony is given by the

person through whom the Lord has given us these writings. She expresses herself in the following manner: *«On December 15, 1965, I was, by Will of the Lord, in San Giovanni Rotondo (Foggia), Italy. And there, the Lord made known to me that I should write down the Gospels and their explanations as the Lord Himself was giving me to understand it and in the order in which I was receiving it, which is how it appears in the book and booklets [this refers to the first edition which comprised a single volume and 18 booklets or pamphlets]. Even though the wording is mine and has my deficiencies, the sense of what I have wished to express in them is the Lord's, and to this I bear witness, and so will He when the time comes ...»*

What in the foregoing quotation is referred to as “explanations” is what, together with the Gospel texts, comprises this book.

And speaking not only of this book but also of other books that express the same “message,” she adds: *«... the Lord made known to me that, concerning the books which you are presenting – “I,” in Christ Arisen, Living the Gospel with its booklets, and Pilgrimage of the People of God with the Explanation of the Drawings – it must be made known to the world that this is a matter of a “message” from God, a call to men so that they may know the truth and dispose themselves to enter through His Mercy before His Justice manifests itself. IT IS IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY THAT THE WORLD KNOW THAT IT IS A MATTER OF A DIVINE INTERVENTION. This is what I have understood the Lord desires.»*

In every page of this book, the only thing that we are constantly reminded of is that, at long last, we might let God be the one to do in us, because He is the only one who can oiler the world the realization of His word. The reading of *Living the Gospel with the Mother* requires

one's having already accepted the foregoing views. In fact, this is how one should read the "explanations" that accompany the "Gospel" texts, and especially that which, because of its demands and severity, can be a cause for scandal. But hasn't the Gospel always been a scandal, and isn't it to continue being so in the eyes of the world?

Viewing the "Gospel" as the life of Christ and, at the same time, as the life of the Christian, or rather, as the only source of life for the world, is what has determined the arrangement of this book and its division into three parts.

The first part, INFANCY, is concerned with the action of the Spirit in Jesus during his infancy. These are the first mysteries that are to become reproduced in each Christian as a result of the transforming action of the Spirit. It is the "coming" of Christ in the soul.

The second part, THE PRECURSOR, is a follow-up of the Life of Christ, based on the attitude of John the Baptist. It is characterized by the soul's "yielding" to Christ, in imitation of the Precursor: *«He must increase, but I must decrease»* (Jn 3:30).

The third part, THE PUBLIC LIFE, is concerned with the rest of the life of Christ Jesus. It is the life of the soul in Christ, her going forward, *«snapping the chains of her yoke,»* (cf Jer 30:8-9) on her way to becoming identified with Christ...

Bethlehem, May 20, 1979

JOSÉ BARRIUSO

WITH THE MOTHER

The word “Mother,” which appears in the title of this book, is, in its highest acceptation, the name ascribed to the Will of God, the “Will of the Father,” which, through the instrumentality of the humble Mary, «... *let it be done unto me according to thy word,*» begot the Word in Mary’s day, which is substance and form of the “good news,” the Gospel, the Word that brought to man the fulfillment of the ancient Promise. This same Will is “the Mother” who nourished the Man Christ with Herself, from the very beginning to the *supreme moment* of his existence among us: «*My food is to do the will of Him who has sent me*» and «...*the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you*»: His identification with the Father’s Will – His Mother – has made Him food for us. And with His flesh and His blood, He was giving to the world “the Mother” that had engendered and nourished his own flesh and blood, so that, *in our day*, everyone and everything might be regenerated from this eternal and only “Mother.”

To think that we can nourish ourselves with the Word of God and can “live the Gospel” without tending toward this unity with God’s Will – “the Mother” – and without depending on Her, is a vain and sterile presumption, for no one other than She can communicate to us the authentic Spirit of the “Word of God.”