

TOGETHER pilgrims on the way towards MADRID 2011

Spiritual journey in the company of CA young saints

Thirteenth step (July 2011)

TIME TO MEDITATE

Matthew 14,13-21 • WE PRAY FOR OUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS, ESPECIALLY FOR YOUTH THAT, DURING THIS MEETING, THROUGH THEIR STRONG AND JOYFUL WITNESSING OF THEIR FAITH, THEY MAY GET TO KNOW YOU

«When Jesus heard of it, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. The crowds heard of this and followed him on foot from their towns. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick.

When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." (Jesus) said to them, "There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves."

But they said to him, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have here."

Then he said, "Bring them here to me," and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over - twelve wicker baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children».

What is our true experience of compassion? It is so easy to be touched by someone's plight, to suffer with him or to be impressed, even for quite some time, by poverty or any other type of need. But it is just as easy for us to forget all about it within a very short time. Very often it happens that our compassion is not strong enough to make us take any concrete action... Actually, compassion means "suffering together". It is the ability to take on other people's burdens as your own, to try to find, together with them, a way out or at least to offer them some relief.

Jesus felt compassion for the crowd and his true compassion was the result of prayer. He translated his compassion into concrete and effective action. His compassion was so real that he did not try to solve the problem alone, he involved his disciples, using their "little", so that they may too share in his compassion and be part of the solution. The result was super abundance, exaggeration: famine was satiated and there was a surplus.

All those we know, our families, our friends, those whom (as yet) we do not know... all these are hungry in so many different ways. They need our compassion; they look to us to "suffer with" them; to make their sorrows and joys, their desires and hunger our own. This sharing in their joys and sorrows could open the possibility of collaboration, of involving everyone so that all hunger may be satiated.

IN THE COMPANY OF SAINTLY YOUNG PEOPLE



BLESSÈD MANUEL LOZANO GARRIDO (LOLO)

Short biography

Manuel Lozano Garrido, commonly known as Lolo, lived for more than fifty years, however many maintain that he actually lived for only 28 years.

He was born in Linares, in Spain, on the 9th August 1920. Lolo grew up in a well-off Christian family which was open to the needs of the poor.

When he was 11 years old he enrolled himself as a member of the local Catholic Action Association. The Association helped him to develop and to mature in his faith. Lolo used to say that CA was everything for him. It was here that his profound relationship with the Holy Eucharist started. When only seventeen, during the religious persecution during the civil war, it was this love for the Eucharist which made him continue to carry the Eucharist secretly with him. In 1938, together with other members of his family, he was arrested because of his faith. On Maundy Thursday, he spent the night in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, hidden in a bunch of flowers.

The really difficult part of his life started when he was 22 years old. He was hit by total paralysis and was confined to a wheel-chair for the rest of his life. He was totally disabled and in 1962, nine years before his death, he even lost his eye-sight.. During one of his visits to Lolo, Fr. Roger from Taizé described him as a "sacrament of pain" and wrote this down on his lampshade.

And yet, Lolo still enjoyed living and never lost his smile which expressed a joy, rooted in the depth of his Christian soul. He became a journalist. When he was still an adolescent he used to write in the CA magazine and later he wrote in the local and national press. He even edited 9 books. His constant point of reference was precisely that Eucharist which he had discovered several years before. Every now and then, he used to stop from his work and from his balcony, which overlooked the parish church of Santa Maria in Linares, he used to repeat: «Now, face to face with the tabernacle, I will write a paragraph ».

He looked upon his job, through books and radio, as a means of evangelizing. He founded Sinai, a group of 300 sick people which prayed for those involved in the media and which offered spiritual support to those who worked in social communication spheres.

His work kept him busy day in day out and with the proceeds Lolo was able to support himself. He followed the Second Vatican Council with love for the Church and published, by himself, a monthly periodical for all Sinai members. When he was granted permission to have Mass said in his room, he wanted his typewriter to be put under the table which served as an altar to show that his full trust was in Christ and that all his work was inspired by him.

Lolo died on the 3rd November 1971. After almost 40 years, on the 11th June 2010, Pope Benedict XVI included his name with the Blessed. The day after, the Beatification Ceremony was held in Linares. The second reading during the liturgy was one of his writings. He was buried in the church of Santa Maria just opposite his balcony.

He is the first journalist to be declared blessed and also the first paralytic.

Lolo's words

«Young man, your hour has come. I declare that I have put my trust in you.

Young man, this is the opportune time for you because the boat of your soul is heading towards routes which call for a heroic response.

Young man: enter within yourself and unfold your sails so that they may take you to lands which you are to conquer and wherein there is an empty space where your name will be written.

Young man: your faith, the rapid race of your life of grace, bends like an archer's bow in order to reach the heart of others who do not know Christ. The empty benches in the chapel quietly wait for the heavy weight of your knees. Give Christ a sign so that he may bestow his abundant graces on the dark nights of those who do not believe.

Young man: the faith, which you have followed without any effort, is a bleeding way for millions of souls, who, sitting on the threshold of the porch in the shade of death, are thirty without knowing it.. Do not ignore the treasure of your faith any more and launch out to redeem those, who are crying, because of the thorns which surrounded them, and who are predestined to be your brethren in heaven's immortal home.

Young man: Your hour has come. This is the opportune moment for you, courageous captains who are not afraid of hard work and who know how to involve themselves and never lose courage. I declare that I have put my hope in you.»

(Rev. Crusade, Youth AC Linares, October 1956)

A young person like us

«Manuel Lozano Garrido, a lay believer, who, through his example and writings, even during his illness which kept him bound to a wheel-chair for nearly 28 years, found the way of radiating his love for God, Although towards the end of his life, he even lost his eye-sight, he still continued to win souls for Christ through his serene joy and his indestructible faith. In him, journalists find an eloquent witness of the good which can be done when the pen reflects a bountiful soul and is put at the service of truth and of noble causes.»

Benedict XVI, *Angelus*, Sunday 13 June 2010

«It is not difficult to imagine John Paul II's joy at seeing a disabled person being raised to the glory of the Bernini. The congregation of saints has to convert the flights of steps into a ramps. There has been no precedence of anyone in a wheel-chair having been raised to this glory. I like to think that divine Providence has reserved the privilege of being the first one for Lolo.»

Cardinal Javierre at the presentation of Lolo's biography in Madrid