

Christ's words in this Sunday's Gospel mean that one must put Him first and commit oneself decisively to him: being a disciple of Christ means taking God's side and not compromising in any way. That is how this Sunday's Gospel passage has been read in the Tradition of the Church: "We should have charity towards all – towards relatives and towards strangers – but without separating ourselves from the love of God out of love for them" (St. Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia*, 37, 3). The Second Vatican Council makes a similar point when it teaches that Christians must strive "to please God rather than men, always ready to abandon everything for Christ" (*Apostolican actuositatem*, 4).

Pope Leo XIV, in an address to the national pilgrimage of altar servers of France on 25 August 2025, writes: "Perhaps you realize how much we need hope. You certainly hear that the world is in a bad way, facing increasingly serious and worrying challenges. You may be affected, either personally or in your circle of friends and family, by suffering, illness or disability, failure, the loss of a loved one; and, in the face of these trials, your heart is filled with sadness and anxiety. Who will come to our aid? Who will have mercy on us? Who will come to save us? Not only from our sorrows, our limitations, and our faults, but also from death itself?

The answer is perfectly clear and has resounded throughout history for 2,000 years: Jesus alone comes to save us, and no one else: because only He has the power—He is almighty God Himself—and because He loves us. Saint Peter said it emphatically: 'There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). Never forget these words, dear friends; engrave them in your hearts, and put Jesus at the center of your lives ...

There is certain proof that Jesus loves us and saves us: He gave His life for us by offering it on the cross. Indeed, there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for those one loves (Jn 15:13). And this is the most wonderful thing about our Catholic faith, something that no one could have imagined or hoped for: God, the creator of heaven and earth, wanted to suffer and die for us, His creatures ... What do we have to fear from such a God who loved us so much? What more could we hope for? What are we waiting for to love Him in return as He deserves?"

Father Frei