

# ST SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMITTEE

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### *Following the Obedient Jesus*

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Following the obedient Jesus gives us occasion to reflect about how Jesus is obedient. The Easter season announcement is that Jesus was obedient to his Father until death, death on a Cross. It seems that Jesus' obedience is defined as much as by who he is as by his experiences in love, loving just as his Father loves the world.

Our first consideration, the word "obedience": it means to listen and then to respond. Much is factored into the way in which one listens. Does one really listen, that is to say, open to responding to a call outside of oneself? What attitudes, fears, bad experiences impinge upon our capacity to really listen? There are always objective and subjective elements involved in the listening process. Jesus identified himself as the Suffering Servant, the one dedicated to give his life for the salvation of humanity. It is from this fundamental posture that he obeys his Father in love even to the Cross. From what fundamental posture do we listen?

Jesus was obedient to his Father, to the reality of the people with whom he walked, to the reality of the people of Israel, to himself. All of these reference points calling him to respond in love, he could balance and address in a consistent way. He acts in harmony with the impulses of the Holy Spirit in carrying out his Father's mission to bring the whole of humanity to live in the trinitarian family. Jesus was faithful to his mission. And it was that mission that defined the field of his obedience.

Jesus' obedience caused pain and confusion in the very bosom of the Holy Family. When I meditate the episode of the finding of the young Jesus in the Temple, I think about Joseph and Mary, perplexed by his absence. Jesus' answer to them was that he must be about doing the will of his Father (Luke 2:41-52). Obedience can also produce tensions and conflicts in our lives. It involves a process of discernment which implies an openness to respond generously. This process always brings conflict. Am I faithful to God, to the people to whom I have been missioned, to myself, to the mission and to the religious family that sent me forth in mission?

With Jesus there is no delay from what he hears and feels in his human experiences to the way in which he responds. When he hears the cries of the poor, of the abandoned, of the isolated, he immediately responds. He responds in the same way that Yahweh acted from the first day of the creation of the world: the Lord said and it existed (Genesis 1:3-4). The listening to his Father means listening to the groans of a fallen humanity and then responding to it with the same love and diligence with which he responds to his Father and the Holy Spirit.

The word "obedience" also means being open to respond to the other. Jesus demonstrates a radical openness in responding to everyone, not only to those who needed his attention but also those that persecuted him. Jesus responds delicately but firmly to the scribes of the Law and the Pharisees, as he does to the woman caught in adultery, to Matthew, to Zaccheus, etc.....

Jesus' obedience shows his absolute intimate relationship with the Father and the Holy

Spirit. It began from an intimate relationship, of brotherhood, to express that same relation “ad extra” in the creation of a human being. Obedience for us has to be from our relationship as brothers and sisters through baptism, in the religious life, in mission....

Reflection Questions:

- 1) How do I give expression to obedience in my life? Who are the people and what are the circumstances that demand from me a faithful response in love?
- 2) Listening to God’s voice in my life, to what is the Lord calling me?
- 3) What are the life situations that are frustrating my obedient response in love?