

## Lent Meditation 10. 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021



### Gal.6,2

**“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.”**

*‘The only thing that counts,’* says Paul earlier in this letter, *‘is faith expressing itself through love.’* The same thing is here described as *‘fulfilling the law of Christ’.*

The purpose of being a Christian is not this that I may gain the life that I seek, but that I fulfil the law of Christ, that this law should be fulfilled through me. Jesus says: *‘Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?” Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”* (Mt.7,21-23) That is, all the great things I have done in the name of Jesus shall not count at all if the one thing that does count, does not – fulfilling the law of Christ.

The means to the end that is this purpose of fulfilling the law of Christ is freedom. It is not by law (the “you have to”) that one comes to fulfil this law, but – paradoxically! – through freedom from the law (the “your sins are forgiven”). *‘It is for freedom,’* says Paul, *‘that Christ has set you free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.’* The ‘slavery’ Paul here talks about is to sin and to fear and is brought about through failure to keep the law. *Sin enslaves,* says Jesus (Jn.8,34), and this removes from us the ability to fulfil the law.

It is therefore essential that we remain in the freedom that Christ’s grace through the forgiveness of our sins opens up and safeguards for us, and that we learn to be at home in this freedom – that we are free from *slavery* to the law of sin even as it still retains a foothold in us, free from having to fear and

worry for ourselves, free from condemnation, free to live for him who has given his life for us.

Only in the freedom we have in Christ can we '*be slave of all*' (Mk.10,44) and fulfil the law of Christ. Outside or apart from this freedom the law of Christ must be a burden. In the freedom, for which Christ has set us free, the burden of the other (and the burden that *is* the other!) becomes freedom's way to prove itself. Read Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan Lk.10,25-37, that is, of a man who is free. And let us not seek by law what must come by repentance and faith.