

The Virtues of Jesus Christ—Obedience

From the moment of the Incarnation, the life of Jesus Christ was characterized by obedience. This truth He Himself states: *I came down from heaven, not do my own will, but the will of him who sent me* (John 6:38). This obedience, according to St. Alphonsus Liguori, must be understood of His human nature: "He obeyed, not as God, but as man, and as a servant, as He had made Himself: *Taking the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men* (Philippians 2:7)."

The obedience of Christ began when He became man, and continued without interruption until His final breath on the Cross. He submitted to all the precepts of the Old Law, including circumcision and the Presentation in the Temple. At twelve years of age, He was found teaching the learned men in the Temple. But at a word from His Holy Mother, He went down to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph and *was subject to them* ((Luke 2:51). When suffering in the Garden, the specter of the Passion loomed before Him. He begged the Father, *If it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt* (Matt. 26:39). He became, *obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross* (Philippians 2:8).

Jesus stressed the importance of obedience because it was by disobedience that Adam and Eve lost their innocence for themselves and for the rest of mankind. He came to repair what had been lost: *For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one* [Jesus Christ]*, many shall be made just* (Romans 5:19).

We are called to imitate Christ. We must obey in all that is right and just. Catholic obedience is never blind obedience, for *Peter and the Apostles said: We ought to obey God rather than men* (Acts of the Apostles 5:29). Disobedience brings this terrible warning: *Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God with joy and gladness of heart, thou shalt serve thy enemy in hunger and thirst and nakedness, and in want of all things* (Deuteronomy 28:47).

(Sources and Quotations: Christ the Life of the Soul, The Incarnation, Birth, and Infancy of Jesus Christ)