

# CONTRIBUTIONS OF MATHEW'S GOSPEL FOR THE PROGRESSIVE PEDAGOGY

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## Contribuciones del Evangelio de Mateo para la pedagogía progresista

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### Abstract

The Progressive Model is based on the pragmatic philosophical idea of the *New School*; This proposal seeks that the student becomes the center of the school system, around whom the entire educational process revolves. From this perspective, education is for life, where the essential elements for the good performance of the adult are learned, that is to say, the society ensures its development. In order to seek new criteria that feed this pedagogical current, the article focuses on the Gospel of Matthew to find there some guidelines that help to emancipate the prejudices that affect the educational process. The Gospel of Matthew is a literary work destined for a community that honestly wishes to open itself to the newness of the Kingdom of God. However, it is difficult for him to leave behind the cultural and religious pre-judgments that have marked his life and that do not allow him to open up to the Good News. The author, with sharp writing, combines narrations of the activity of Jesus of Nazareth with speeches where the novelty of his message is specified. This article focuses on the five speeches seen as a pedagogical itinerary that helps overcome pre-judgments that block the opening to the novelty that life offers, leading to negative judgments a priori of new ways of seeing, understanding and living the novelty of the kingdom of justice, mercy and solidarity.

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### Keywords

Progressive pedagogy, Gospel of Matthew, speeches, Kingdom of God, Pedagogy, prejudices.

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### Resumen

El Modelo Progresista se basa en la idea filosófica pragmática propia de la *Escuela Nueva*; esta propuesta busca que el estudiante se vuelva el centro del sistema escolar, alrededor de quien gira todo el proceso educativo. Desde esa perspectiva la educación es para la vida, allí se aprenden los elementos primordiales para el buen desempeño del adulto, es decir la sociedad asegura su desarrollo. En aras de buscar nuevos criterios que alimenten esta corriente pedagógica, el artículo se centra en el Evangelio de Mateo para encontrar allí algunas pautas que ayuden a emancipar de los prejuicios que afectan el proceso educativo. El Evangelio de Mateo es una obra literaria destinada a una comunidad que desea honestamente abrirse a la novedad del Reino de Dios. Sin embargo, le resulta difícil dejar atrás los prejuicios culturales y religiosos que han marcado su vida y que no le permiten abrirse a la Buena Nueva. El autor, con punzante redacción, va combinando narraciones de la actividad de Jesús de Nazaret con discursos donde se puntualiza la novedad de su mensaje. El presente artículo se centra en los cinco discursos vistos como itinerario pedagógico que ayuda a superar los pre-juicios que bloquean la apertura a la novedad que ofrece la vida, que llevan a juzgamientos negativos a priori de las nuevas formas de ver, entender y vivir la novedad del reino de justicia, misericordia y solidaridad.

### Palabras claves

Pedagogía progresiva, Evangelio de Mateo, discursos, Reino de Dios, pedagogía, prejuicios.

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## Introduction

John Dewey<sup>1</sup> proposed progressive pedagogy (progressive education, new school or new education) as a tension between theory and praxis, where the abstract body should be given applicability. Dewey rejected traditional education, based on disciplinary rules, and proposed an education based on the constant reorganization of experience, leading the social process to benefit the community and communication.

Progressive pedagogy is based on the conceptual structure of the interlocutor, that is, part of their ideas regarding a topic under discussion, and from there provides a conceptual change, the result of an active construction where the pre-concept is confronted with the new concept, so that it is applied to specific situations.

Thus, the progressive pedagogy is based on the ideas of pragmatism, especially in the proposed transformation of the educational system, making the interlocutor in the center, around whom the whole process revolves. Under this perspective, education is for life, and must occur in a natural environment where one learns for a good exercise in adult life.

All this breaks with the traditional paradigm that made learning a process made from the outside, to which the student had to adhere. Instead, progressive pedagogy defends action as a condition and guarantee of learning. Five are its postulates:

- The end of education is not limited to learning, but to prepare for life.

- If the school prepares for life, nature and life must be studied.
- The educational content should be organized from the simple and concrete and go to the complex and abstract.
- The child is the subject of his knowledge and the primacy of his experimentation.
- The didactic resources are useful because they allow experimentation and help to educate the senses, guaranteeing the development of intellectual capacities.

This proposal of Dewey can find in the Gospel of Matthew a good contribution in order to achieve its educational objective. Even more, when it is found that a change of mentality is not an easy task, since there are attitudes, habits and customs that are part of the identity that sustains personal and social existence. However, such a change is imperative, in order to read the signs of the times with objectivity and purpose. Only in this spirit can socio-pastoral attitudes be modified and adapted to the demands of the 21st century. For those who live facing a demanding society, even more so if they profess the Christian faith, going out to meet the brother in the periphery of cities and fields, is the way to find oneself and with God who dwells, in a special way, among the poor and their invisibilities.

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In the city we need other maps, other paradigms that help us to reposition our thoughts and attitudes. We cannot remain disoriented, because such bewilderment leads us to mistake the way and also confuses the people of God. Catholics come from an ancient 'pastoral practice', in which the Church was the only referent of culture and, as a teacher, felt the responsibility to delineate and impose not only the cultural form, but also the values and more deeply, the personal and collective imaginary. But that time does not exist anymore, and today Christians are not the only ones who produce culture, neither the first nor the most listened to. It is urgent a change in mentality, that without falling into relativism or renounce their Christian identity, be brave, bold and without fear of transmitting their message! (Pope Francis, 2017).

In this article we will analyze the change of mentality that Mateo sees as urgent in his community. The author proposes five Speeches with which Jesus seeks to dismantle the legal mentality that permeated the neo-Christians, especially of Semitic origin, so that they open themselves to the novelty of the Kingdom of God. The first Christians expected to live the Kingdom in their generation (see 1Thes 4,15-17; 1Cor 15,51-52; Rom 13,11-12). Now, Matthew tells them that this will be possible only if they open up to the novelty of that Good News. What does that involve?

## Historical Context

Mateo is the most commented gospel by Fathers of the Church like Origen, Hilary, Jerome and John Chrysostom, due to its clarity and order, that do of it good pedagogical material. Matthew's eagerness is to evangelize a community that faces the stresses of diversity; it encourages her not to succumb to the fatigue that arises from the expectation of the Parousia, an event that lasts and that affects animosity and service.

From the year 63 BC, Palestine was a Roman colony, although the Jews enjoyed a certain autonomy that exempted them, for example, from the imperial cult, which meant having religious freedom, in exchange for which they had to pay the demanded taxes. However, there were rules from which they could not be exempted, even if they offended their faith. For example, the procurator had the power to appoint the High Priest or could intervene in the internal affairs of the Jews. For this he had the backing of Sadducees and merchants, while facing the opposition of Pharisees, scribes, Zealots, Baptists, etc. (Guerra, 2008).

Internally, the Sanhedrin controlled the social, religious and economic life of the people, through a well-organized routine that included pilgrimages, sacrifices and offerings based on legal precepts taken from the Pentateuch and endorsed by the teachers of the law. An example of this was the standards of purity that defined whether someone was worthy to stand before God. For this they had an intricate theology of retribution<sup>2</sup>, which held that "just" was the one who fulfilled the Law. That gave him access to the community. In that sense, the sick, poor, foreigners and women were impure and deserved the punishment that God reserved for sinners, which included the separation of the community. To be readmitted, they had to offer sacrifices (Lev 11-16) that used to leave them in ruin, which was seen, once again, as impurity.

The Jews related retribution to the idea of judgment: "The Son of man will give to each according to his works" (Mt 16,27). That is, to access the Kingdom of God, it was necessary to show works of purity. Jesus will correct this idea by saying that the Kingdom is a gift from God, and is not conditioned by the fulfillment of laws. The believer should only accept or reject the Kingdom (Pesch, 1972).

They have acted corruptly toward him; to their shame they are no longer his children, but a warped and crooked generation. Is this the way you repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you? Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and



they will explain to you. When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye... You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth. The LORD saw this and rejected them because he was angered by his sons and daughters. "I will hide my face from them," he said, "and see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful. (Deut 32,5-10.18-20)<sup>3</sup>

Around 70 AD, Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, which was a catastrophe for Israel, because it lost its identity as a chosen people. Only two groups survived: Pharisees and Christians. In the process of reorganization, the Pharisees-along with scribes-had an advantage, since they already had an influence on the people. Thus, from the synagogue began to interpret the law from a *legalistic and intolerant Judaism*, against Christians, more open to other cultures. By AD 85, the antagonism was such that Christians were expelled from the synagogue, and they were forced to form a "new" religious community that, in the end, was a copy of their Jewish experience. Thusly.

	Judaism	Christianism
<b>Place of meeting</b>	Synagogue	Home
<b>Day of meeting</b>	Sabbath	Sunday
<b>Religious Leader</b>	High priest	Pope
<b>Ministers</b>	Priests, Levites	Presbyters, deacons
<b>Book</b>	Pentateuch	Gospels
<b>Ethical rule</b>	Decalogue	Beatitudes

## General information on the Gospel of Matthew

For a long time it was affirmed that the author of the work was Matthew, the tax collector (Mt 9, 9-13). Mk 2,13-17 and Lk 5,27-32 do not call him Matthew, but Levi. This is explained, according to (Schmid, 1981), because Jesus changed his name, just as he did with Simon, whom he called Peter. Levi was called *Matthaios*, a Greek name that translates the Hebrew expression *mattai*, abbreviated form of *mattityahu* = gift of God (Guerra, 2008). According to Mk 2,14, the father of Levi was Alpheus, and his brother James the Lesser (3,18). However, in Mk 15,40 it is said that Mary was the mother of James, Joseph and Salome, but does not say that

it is Matthew's. That leads us to believe that Matthew and James must have been distant relatives of Jesus. On the other hand, if he was a collector, he had to know how to read and write and have skill for numbers, which would explain why the gospel is well organized.

Based on these criteria, the Church accepted Matthew as the author. Thus, Papias (100-120 AD) argued that: "Matthew collected in Hebrew (Aramaic) language the sayings of the Lord (lodges). Later each one interpreted them as it could". This idea was followed by Irenaeus, Origen, etc. However, authors such as (Brown, 2002) and (Viviano, 2004) question the authorship of Levi. Already Tertullian (363 AD) had his doubts for three reasons: 1. There was no indication of a work written in Hebrew (the well-known era originally in Greek); 2. The term lodges (sayings) makes references to phrases spoken by Jesus, which Matthew would have collected; but that is not properly a gospel; 3. It is not clear what it means *each interpreted as he could*; some believe that Papias wanted to cover up his own interpretation.

What is known today is that the gospel is the result of materials made by many hands that, later, a final editor gathered in a work, and attributed to Matthew, in a pseudonym process. The internal analysis of the work reveals who was the final editor: Judeo-Christian (Mt 13,52), of rabbinical formation, he knew the Greek, he was a leader of the community (16, 17-28, 25,5) and he knew the Scriptures (5,17-18).

The probable place of composition of the Gospel of Matthew was Antioch of Syria (see Acts 13). In that city peoples of Christians of Jewish and Gentile origin coexisted, which did not make easy the coexistence. There was the tension between Paul and Peter (Gal 2,11-14), which made the community look at Paul with reserve, and support Peter (Mt 14,28-31; 15,15; 16,22-23 ; 17,24-27; 18,21; 19,27). Peter, of Jewish mentality, was more concerned about the observance of the Law, while Paul, of Hellenistic thought, relativized it. Another argument in favor of Antioch like place of composition is its relation with the Didajé, judeo-Christian writing of end of the first century, and originated in the same region.

There is agreement that the work was written after 70 AD, given the references to the destruction of the Temple (22,7) and its acceptable theological and ecclesial development, typical of the late 1st century. The most common date is between the 80s and 85 AD (Brown, 2002). With the destruction of Jerusalem, many Christians migrated to cities such as Pela, Antioch of Syria (Mt 4,23-25) and Damascus (Acts 9,1-25; 11,19-26). In Pela there was a community of people who had lost their land, until they fell into poverty and slavery (Mt 18,23-30; 20,1-7; 21,33-39; 25,26). This community, of Jewish origin (5, 47, 24, 20), insists on fulfilling the Law (5,17-19): it

quotes about 70 times the OT, it uses Hebrew expressions (*hell, flesh, blood, bind, loose, holy city*), avoid using the name of God, mention Jewish customs as the offering and describe Samaritans and Pharisees (23.5-7; 26.17).

However, in the community there were also Jews from the diaspora, of Greek mentality, and even converted foreigners (28,19), who contributed a style of life that came to confuse the Judeo-Christians. To overcome the tension, Matthew proposes new roles and norms to the community (Guerra, 2008):

- Mixed church: community formed by Christians of 2 tendencies: those who observe the Law (5,17-19) and those who relativize it. Matthew mediates in this tension saying that the Law is valid, but from the praxis of love (22,38-40); Jesus did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it (5,17), but with mercy (9,13; 12,17).
- Conflict with Pharisees: community that disputes the leadership of the Pharisees. In that dispute, the community lost, because it was small, disorganized and with problems that arose from the liberal interpretation of the Law, on the part of Christian-gentiles. The Pharisees expel Christians from the synagogue (10,17-23; Cf. Jn 9).
- Community in tension: community that is not open to the Gentiles, because it saw its mission among “the lost sheep of Israel” (10.6; 15.24), which excluded the pagans (18.17). It will be the tension with the Pharisees that forces the community to open itself to the Gentile world: “Make disciples of all” (28,19).
- Controversies regarding the parousia: community that believed that the parousia was already. But, as that did not happen, they grew tired and losing strength. To those who believed that it was enough to pray and wait (7:21), Matthew clarifies that the disciple must act according to the will of the Father, ready and working (16, 27; 25, 31-46).



## Literary structure

It is convenient, before entering into the pedagogical itinerary, to know the structure of the work and its main theological characteristics. There are several ways to divide the work. We will dwell on two of them: one that visualizes the central theme of the work, and another that helps to highlight the five Speeches in which we focus this article.

**CHIASMIC MODEL (GUERRA, 2008)**

A (1-4) Birth and beginning of the missionary activity of Jesus	<b>Narrative</b>
B (5-7) Beatitude- promulgation of the Kingdom	<b>Speech</b>
C (8-9) Authority of the Messiah and invitation to the Kingdom	<b>Narrative</b>
D (10) Speech of the Mission	<b>Speech</b>
E (11-12) The rejected Messiah	<b>Narrative</b>
F (13) PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM	<b>Speech</b>
E1 (14-17) Recognized Messiah	<b>Narrative</b>
D1 (18) Ecclesial Speech	<b>Speech</b>
C1 (19-22) Autoridad de Jesús que invita al Reino	<b>Narrative</b>
B1 (23-25) Curses - The attainment of the Kingdom	<b>Speech</b>
A1 (26-28) Death and resurrection - beginning missionary activity	<b>Narrative</b>

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**GLOBAL OVERVIEW OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**

**Introduction:** *Mystery of Jesus* (Mt 1-2). Jesus takes up a central event: the exodus. The peoples recognize him as King, because he descends from Abraham and from David.

**First part:** *Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God* (Mt 3,1-13,52)

- *The Kingdom of God* (Mt 3-7): with Jesus comes the Kingdom (Narration, cc 3-4); the Kingdom of God is justice that liberates (Speech, cc 5-7).
- *The Kingdom frees the poor* (Mt 8-10): Justice produces signs (Narration, verses 8-9); Jesus needs collaborators (Speech, c.10).
- *The Kingdom creates conflicts* (Mt 11,1-13,52): Reactions against Jesus (Narration, cc 11-12); The parables explain the present and future of the Kingdom (Speech, 13,1-52).

**Second part:** *Jesus organizes and leads the new people of God* (13,53-28, 20)

- With Jesus a new people is born (Mt 13,53-18,35): follow Jesus (Narration, c 13,53-17,27); Life of the new people of God (Speech, c 18).
- Definitive coming of the Kingdom (Mt 19-25): The Kingdom of God is for all (Narration, verses 19-23); The trial process (Speech, c 24-25).

**Conclusion:** *Passover of liberation* (Mt 26-28): The death and resurrection of Jesus mark the end of the kingdom of injustice, and the beginning of teaching to all peoples. Jesus will always be present in the midst of his disciples.

## Theological content

Matthew is defined as an “ecclesial gospel”, open to the novelty of the Good News, and as a “catechetical gospel” that presents the teaching of Jesus in an orderly manner. Earlier we said that there was a strong tension between Christians and Pharisees for the privilege of being “the true people of God.” “Who had the authority to interpret the Law? The Pharisees felt heirs to the promise, for being the authentic people of God. For their part, Christians felt themselves to be heirs of the promise, because they were a new people of God, thanks to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Viviano, 2004).

This tension extended to the Christian community, which had serious challenges to adjust its life to the teaching of Jesus. It was difficult to remain faithful to the Gospel and the inherited Jewish tradition. Although the community had some cohesion and some ministries had flourished, much instruction was still needed! In that context Matthew presents the teaching of Jesus. How to ensure that his teaching is accepted as normative? The first thing Matthew does is to affirm that Jesus has authority, because he is the son of David, son of Abraham (1,1) and new Moses (5,1ss). Thus, his interpretation of the Law is based on his messianic authority (David) and his authority of faith (Abraham).

That is what he intends with the story of the genealogy (1,1-17). There, in a harmonious way, Matthew makes a synthesis of the history of the people of Israel, naming kings and women, not so much as historical figures, but as symbols, the first ones - kings - represent the attitude of God with his people, whom he loves and with whom He wants to make an alliance. The second ones -women- point out what the human response has been: deceit, impurity, betrayal. Let’s take a brief look at these characters.



Character	Motive
<b>David: God's chosen one</b> (Pérez-Rioja, 1971, p. 244)	Considered a just king, brave, a warrior, though a sinner. Chosen by God to govern Judah (1010-1006 BC) and then the United Kingdom (1006-966 BC).
<b>Salomon: the wise King</b> (AA.VV., Biografías y vidas en línea, 2017)	He ruled Israel (970-931) with the support of Bathsheba, his mother, Nathan, and the high priest Zadok. His was a period of peace with Egypt, Arabia, Phenicia, Damascus and Edom. To consolidate his power he married the daughter of Pharaoh and made a pact with Hiram, king of Tíre.
<b>Asa: the King zealous of the Law</b> (AA. VV., Wikipedia, 2017)	Third King of Judah (913-873 BC), great-grandson of Solomon. Compliant with the Law, he attacked idolatry and rejected the invasion attempts of Egypt and Baaá, king of Israel. Prohibited prostitution.
<b>Josiah: the last good king</b>	He was 8 years old when he was king of the southern tribes. He was a good king, like David, Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah. Given the prevailing idolatry, he fought to rebuild the Temple; there the high priest Hilkiah found the book of the Law with which the religious reform began.

Character	Motive
<b>Tamar: the deceiver</b> (Ratzinger, 2007, pp. 39-40).	Judah, son of Jacob, married the Canaanite Shua, with whom he had three sons: Er, Onan and Sellah. Er married Tamar, but died without children. According to the levirate law, Onan married the widow, but he avoided getting her pregnant, which caused her death. Judah asked Tamar to wait for Sela to be older to give her as a husband, but Tamar feared he would not keep his promise, so she disguised herself as a prostitute and slept with her father-in-law. As he left, he took his cane as proof. After three months, Judah knew that she was pregnant and wanted to kill her, but she, with the cane, proved that he was the father of her twins, Perez and Zerah.
<b>Rahab: the prostitute</b> (Baskin, 1979 (11.2)).	She lived in a house on the wall of Jericho. Joshua's spies, who were being persecuted, hid there. When the stalkers asked, Rahab gave them a false lead. Knowing that Jericho was going to fall at the hands of Israel, Rahab asked for protection for her and her family.
<b>Rut: the for-eigner</b> (Sakenfeld, 1999, pp. 11-12)	Moabite married to Elimelech. After a famine in Moab, and after the death of her husband, she followed her mother-in-law Naomi to Bethlehem, where she met Boaz, who was the relative who was to rescue her (Lev 25, 25-55). With him he had Obed as his son.
<b>Betsheba: the unfaithful</b> (Turro, 1971)	Uriah's wife, she was unfaithful to David, from whom she became pregnant. Given the situation, David asked Uriah to go to his house and be with his wife, but he did not. David asked Joab to put him in the most difficult battle, so that he would die. After the mourning, David married Bathsheba.

The genealogy ends with a synthesis, key to understanding this gospel: “Jacob was the father of Joseph, husband of Mary, from whom Jesus was born, called Christ. So there were 14 generations of Abraham to David; 14 of David to the deportation to Babylon and 14 from the deportation until the birth of Christ” (1,16-17). The 14 encloses two series of 7; if we add the three groups of 14 generations, gives 6, imperfection number. In other words, Matthew expresses that in the history of salvation God has always been willing to bless the people (kings), but this has always fallen into infidelity (women). It takes a generation, the seventh, the perfect (Church!), Which is born of Joseph, the house of David, and Mary, a woman without blemish.

14 generations from Abraham to David	2 generations
14 generations from David until deportation	2 generations
14 generations from deportation to the birth of Christ	2 generations
<b>Total</b>	6 generations
Joseph and Mary, Father of Jesus, the Christ	Seventh Generation: Church

The Greek term ἐκκλησία, is translated to Latin as ecclesia, to mean the «assembly assembled to discuss a subject». Only Matthew uses the term «church» to talk about the Christian community. Let's see an analysis, according to Aguirre:

The Church of Matthew has two characteristics: (1) It is fraternal. In 28,9-10, the disciples appear as brothers; (2) Continue the mission. Mt 10 describes the love of Jesus for the poor, which causes him to send his disciples to teach and heal (see Mt 9,35 and 10,1, 4,17 and 10,7, 8-9 and 10,8). For Matthew, the task of the Church is to follow the work of Jesus: to proclaim the Kingdom and free from evil, with gratuitous love. Now, the Church is not perfect. Believing that it is, would be a temptation that would lead to sectarianism and intolerance, to believe oneself to be judge who dictates a judgment that belongs only to God (Cf. 13, 24-30: the wheat and the darnel, Jesus stops the zeal of whoever wants to be a vigilante). For Matthew, the Church is a community where all are called, but not all are chosen; one has to do good deeds. Perhaps it is strange that Matthew speaks of judgment (darnel thrown into the fire), but it is he, in Jewish line, that does not speculate about the future, nor make judgments. Its objective is to draw attention to a present that demands good works and avoids the danger of believing itself to be a “pure” community, a consciousness that comes from its Jewish heritage, and that can affect its community. Matthew seeks to correct it, making them see that, although they are called, they have to be coherent with the teaching of Jesus. Of the five Speeches, the first (5.1-12) argues that the Church must be poor,

meek, merciful, builder of peace and justice. The last one (25,31-46) sustains that the Church must attend to the needy (Aguirre, 2007, pp. 6-9).

Once laid the foundations of his work: the messianic authority of Jesus and the destinary Church, Matthew focuses on instructing the community to be the new people of God. For this, “separates the wheat from the darnels,” that is, values the Law of their ancestors, but sees imperative to implement the New Covenant. How to overcome old schemes and prejudices that obscure the novelty of Jesus? If we take into account the literary structure seen before (see above), we see that Matthew divides his work into five parts, which include a narrative of facts (described by Matthew) and a Speech on the New Covenant (made by Jesus). Let's see the following descriptive table (Guerra, 2008):

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<b>Introduction:</b> <i>Mystery of Jesus</i> (Mt 1-2).	Jesus is part of the history of Israel: He descends from Abraham and David, and as New Moses founds the Church, God's new people.
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**1<sup>st</sup> Part:** Jesus proclaims and brings the Kingdom of God (Mt 3, 1-13, 52)

<i>The justice of the Kingdom of God</i> (Mt 3-7)	<i>Narration:</i> With Jesus comes the Kingdom of God (Mt 3-4). <i>First Speech:</i> The Kingdom of God is justice (Mt 5-7).
<i>The justice of the Kingdom frees the poor</i> (Mt 8-10)	<i>Narration:</i> The justice of the Kingdom produces concrete signs (Mt 8-9). <i>Second Speech:</i> Jesus needs collaborators (10).
<i>The justice of the Kingdom produces conflicts</i> (Mt 11-13,52)	<i>Narration:</i> Reactions to the behavior of Jesus (Mt 11-12). <i>Third Speech:</i> The present and future of the Kingdom (Mt 13,1-52).

**2<sup>nd</sup> Part:** Jesus organizes and leads the new people of God (13, 53-28, 20)

<i>From the action of Jesus a new people is born</i> (Mt 13, 53-18, 35)	<i>Narration:</i> The following of Jesus (Mt 13,53-17,27) <i>Fourth Speech:</i> Life of the New People of God (Mt 18).
<i>The definitive coming of the Kingdom</i> (Mt 19-25)	<i>Narration:</i> The Kingdom of God is for all (Mt 19-23). <i>Fifth Speech:</i> The judgment of the end of time (Mt 24-25).
<b>Conclusion:</b> The Passover of liberation (Mt 26-28)	The death and resurrection of Jesus mark the end of the reign of injustice, and the beginning of the mission of the Church, which must bring the teaching of Jesus to all peoples. Jesus will always be present.

For methodological reasons, we leave out the narratives, and focus on the Speeches that are connected to one another. The analysis allows us to delve into the pedagogy of Jesus that seeks to change the prejudice that hinders the community walk.

First speech: The Kingdom of God is justice (Mt 5-7).	Second speech: Jesus and his disciples (Mt 10)	Third Speech: The present and the future of the Kingdom (Mt 13,1-52).	Fourth Speech: Life of the New People of God (Mt 18).	Fifth Speech: The judgment of the end of time (Mt 24-25).
Sermon on the Mount	Missionary Sermon	Sermon of the Kingdom	Community sermon	Scatological sermon
Invitation to change attitude, overcome old teaching and assume the novelty of Jesus.	Whoever accepts the invitation must show his conviction as a missionary.	The missionary must focus his teaching on the value of the New Covenant: the Kingdom of God.	The Kingdom preached must be lived with coherence and testimony of love within the community.	The community, new people of God must live mercy to be treated with mercy.

It is convenient, now, to make an analysis of each of the speeches, to see how they call for conversion, the paradigm shift and the missionary praxis.

**First Speech: *The Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7)*.** In the first Speech, Jesus invert to invest the values received from part of tradition and culture. A change of attitude implies overcoming dogmas, precepts and worldviews received from the old Law. Only in this way can we grasp the new values of the Kingdom, which allow us to re-read the signs of the times, history, nature, community and oneself. Weighing the novelty of emerging values such as solidarity, warmth, closeness, etc., leads to discover the imperative mood in the construction of the new man. This first Speech is undoubtedly the most important of the five that Jesus pronounces, since it implies listening and welcoming the deep metanoia that the Kingdom implies. Task is not easy, because it compromises less to stay in the safe harbor of traditional convictions and complying with conventional norms, to take the leap and think differently, to act against the current. It will always be, beyond novelty, an undertaking that causes anxiety. That is why Jesus invites us to overcome fear and accept the invitation. Blessed are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice!

**The Beatitudes, a new Law (5,1-12):** *Happy the poor in spirit, the one who cries, the patient, the one who hungers and thirsts for justice, the compassionate, the pure of heart, the one who works for peace because they are the children of God.*



The invitation to receive the New Covenant is little like the alliance made at Sinai, which was a list of prohibitions. Jesus invites a commitment in full freedom, not motivated by that holiness that is gestated in religious practices, but by which is configured in the commitment to the brother. No one can define human greatness or finitude, but the person himself. Every human being feels needed and seeks meaning in his life. Jesus starts from this observation to invite everyone to reach their full realization, not by works moved by rewards or punishments, but by the deep conviction that full happiness is given to the other, to work for peace, justice, joy. In that sense, “poor in spirit” implies not living with the expectation of receiving, but with the conviction to give, even to empty oneself. The strength is not inside the person, but in the brother, a sure way to reach God. While the world promotes self-sufficiency, Jesus invites us to seek God and our brother, a point of confidence to face lassitude. With humility we must recognize that without Him we do not reach the goal. This requires meekness, which does not mean resignation, but serenity in the face of what I cannot change and rebellion to fight what cries out for justice. And everything in freedom!

**Salt and light, the new presence in the world (5,13-16):** *You are salt of the earth; if it becomes bland, it is useless. You are the light of the world, nobody lights the lamp to cover it; rather, it sets it high to light the house. Make your light shine; let your works be seen...*

To those who accept his invitation, Jesus shows them the urgency to change the mental scheme. The Law prescribed to put salt in each offering presented to God and to light a light as a symbol of divine triumph over darkness. Whoever accepts to live as a believer has the mission to be good news, taste and brightness. In other words, the invitation is to live the hallmark of love, to shine before men so that the good work may be seen and the Father who is in heaven be glorified. Let the world feel its presence in every action, and thus praise: “Look how they love each other, they shine, they give flavor!”

**Old and New Justice (5,17-48):** *You heard that it was said: “You will not kill”, I tell you: If you get angry with your brother, you deserve judgment... If while you present your offering remember that your brother is angry, leave your offering and make peace... You have heard that it was said: “Do not commit adultery”, I tell you: If you look at a woman with desire you have already committed adultery. If your eye makes you fall, take it out; it is better to lose only the eye and not the whole body... It was*

*also said: "He who divorces gives a certificate to his wife"; I tell you: If you divorce your wife, out of illegitimate union, you make her adulterate... You have heard that it was said: "Do not swear falsely and do what you swear," I tell you: Do not swear by heaven, throne of God, not for the earth, the footstool of your feet... say yes when it is yes, and not when it is not... You have heard that it was said: "An eye for an eye"; I say to you: Do not resist the evil one; if someone hits your right cheek, offer him the other... You heard that it was said: "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy"; I tell you: Love your enemy, pray for him to make God shine the sun on bad and good. If you love the one who loves you, what merit do you have? Also the evil man does...*

Jesus follows his instruction on paradigm shift. The Jew was rooted in the legal prescriptions of the Pentateuch. From there he discerned his behavior, in a kind of fulfillment. Jesus makes it clear that he does not repeal the Law, but that he rereads it from his spirit, which is not legalism, but love! Anyone who annuls the commandment of love and does not teach it, is the smallest in the Kingdom. Jesus questions the Pharisee attitude that focuses on legalism, formality, tradition. We must fulfill the Law that comes from God, not the edges that humans have interpreted. For example, washing one's hands is not properly a divine mandate, but a human interpretation. The law has 2 sides: the external, literal word that defines what to do and what to avoid, and the internal, spiritual understanding that reflects the intention of God. Jesus invites us to make that itinerary. First see the external: *you have heard...*; then it shows the inner side: *I tell you...* At first glance, it seems that Jesus contradicts the Law, but it is not like that; He invites us to go beyond the letter to understand his spiritual application. Thus, not only murder must be avoided, but hate must be eliminated and forgiveness cultivated. Not only physical adultery, but also spiritual adultery should be avoided. It is not enough not to swear falsely, but to fulfill the oath made before God. One should not live only from retributive justice (eye for an eye), but overcome the offense and not increase the pain (Cf. Rom 12,17-21). Not only love the neighbor, but the enemy.

**To do good (6.1-8):** *When you help, do not publish it. Do not imitate the one who gives a show to be praised; He has already received his prize. When you help, do not let your left hand know what your right does. Your Father who sees what is secret, will reward you. When you ask God, do not make long litanies: The words will not make you heard. Before you ask, the Father already knows what you need.*

In this part, Jesus deals with two topics: almsgiving and prayer. Jesus insists that the new man does not do good to be seen, but as a result of a deep conviction that he thusly responds to the love of the Father who sees the secret. The believer will feel the depth of the Father's forgiveness, only if he pardons with sincerity. The path that gives access to the Father is the practice of justice, not as a means of self-promotion, but as a response to who loved first. Regarding prayer, it is the effective means to be in relationship with God, but it must be an intimate dialogue between the Father and son. Jesus criticizes the prayer made only to be exhibited before others; such attitude perverts and weakens trust in God.

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**Our Father and fasting (6,9-23):** *If you forgive, the Father will forgive you. When you fast, do not put on a sad face, so that your fasting is noticed, wash your face and perfume yourself. It is not man who should notice your fast, but the Father who sees the secret. Do not gather treasures in the earth where the moth damages, but in the sky where there is no rust. Where your treasure is, your heart is.*

Life usually leads through dead ends. The temptation is to fall into a pietism that “demands” God to act with haste. Jesus invites us to live with the conviction that prayer, rather than evocation to force God to act, is acceptance of the new believing ethic. Prayer is divided into two parts: relationship with God and relationship with the other. If God is Father, all, without distinction, are brothers. In the Church the individual does not prevail, but the family and the common good, here and now, without worrying about the future, which is in the hands of God. In the family, what affects one affects everyone. The Our Father is a reaction against individualism. He is not my Father, but Father of all and of all that is in heaven and earth. Saying Father requires welcoming the brother, overcoming the tyranny of the “I” and living the “we”: our bread, our debts, our sanctity. Thus, “old is transformed into new, chaos into harmony, injustice into justice, sickness into health” (Ronchi, 2005, p. 27). In other words, the community relationship becomes a relationship of justice and forgiveness, giving, rather than receiving. The believer must die to the self, to look at the other. While human justice is retributive - pay what you owe - the justice of God is to be and do for the other - I forgive you, even if you owe me -.

**Trust only in God (6,24-34):** *One cannot serve two masters, because you love one and hate the other. You cannot serve God and money. Do not worry about clothes and food. More important is life than that. Look at the birds, they do not sow or harvest, but the Father feeds them. Are you not worth more than them? Seek the Kingdom and its justice, and all these things will be given to you.*

What is most opposed to God is not worldly pleasure or the power to manipulate, but the desire for wealth. Money is a sign of violence and death when it becomes the ultimate goal. God is gratuity, liberation, communion; money is interest, slavery, division. The tension is between God who lets himself be and the money he does not let be. Jesus lets himself act freely when choosing between one and the other (Cf. Deut 30,15). The decision is personal. Living for money separates from God and brother. Money becomes god! The believer must be careful of accumulating treasures, because that entails risks. For example, forgetting that God made man to transcend and not to close around riches that cause anxiety. The more you have, the more you want. The conqueror becomes a slave to what he conquers! Money - or its absence - causes conflicts between the one who has it and the one who wants to have it. A change of mentality requires giving money the place it deserves, as a means, never as an end, not even a religious one. Many camouflage their greed in pious forms, surrendering to social or religious cults, thinking that this way they fulfill the will of God. The opening to the experience of God occurs when the believer opens himself to the gratuity of God, the principle of love that sustains in a loving way the human existence.

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**Children of the Kingdom (7,1-14):** *In the way you judge, you will be judged. The measurement you use will be used with you. You see the fuzz in someone else's eye and you do not feel the trunk in yours. Do not give the saint to the dog, or throw pearls to the pig, for they could trample on it. Ask and you will be given, look and you will find, call and it will be opened. Does a father give his son a stone when he asks for bread? If you who are bad give good things to your children, with greater reason the Father gives good things to those who ask them!*

Training to fulfill Jesus' mission requires introspection, seeing personal strengths and limitations, before judging others. That's what it means to "take out the trunk from one's eye." If Jesus does not judge who beats and

crucifies Him, then we must not judge anyone! Sometimes, the inclination is to complain, but in that moment, the believer must remember that he bears his own fragility. That will allow you to understand the other and open yourself with empathy. With the rod that I measure, I will be measured... to the love that you give, a lot of love corresponds to you. Thus, the believer must correct with mercy. You cannot operate without anesthesia... the patient would die of pain. Mercy is the anesthesia that makes us accept corrections. In that sense, when correcting, we must do it from the truth, without slander or false testimonies that ruin the brother's fame. Certainly, truth can be painful, but said with mercy helps to grow. Jesus invites us to correct ourselves within the Church, with delicacy, truth and humility.

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**By their fruits they will be known (7,15-27):** *Beware of the false prophet who presents himself as a sheep, but he is a wolf. The healthy tree bears good fruit; the bad tree bears bad fruit... The tree that does not bear good fruit is cut... It is not enough to say: Lord! to enter the Kingdom. Many will say: 'We have spoken in your name, expelled demons and made miracles'. Then I will say: I do not know you, get away from me. He who listens to my words and puts them into practice, is like the wise man who builds on rock: the rain falls and the wind blows, and the house stands. Whoever does not hear my words or put it into practice is like the fool who builds on sand: the rain falls, the wind blows, and the house falls.*

The content is linked to the person who communicates. A good message, said without kindness, does not convince or convert. At the end of the first speech, Jesus invites the coherent praxis of the new lifestyle: to produce good fruits (verses 15-20), to speak and practice (verses 21-23) and to build on rock (verses 24-27). The believer must be careful with the false prophet who gives the wrong message. "He is dressed as a sheep, but he is a wolf" (Mt 10,16; Lk 10,3). The opposition wolf-lamb is irreconcilable, unless the wolf leaves the violence as Is 65,25 suggests. It is not easy to discern the true from the false prophet. It usually happens that, for personal or group interests, the one announcing an uncomfortable truth is accused of being a false prophet. That happened to Jesus. To help discern, Jesus proposes the example of the good tree that never gives bad fruit, nor does the bad tree bear good fruit (Cf. Jn 15,2-6). Thus, it is not enough to talk, you have to practice; only then will he be recognized (Mt 7,22-23).

The final teaching of this first speech is about a house built on rock or sand. This is a reference to the opposition faith and life. It is not about talking about God, but about doing his will. "Happy is he who hears the Word

and puts it into practice” (Lk 11:28). There are believers with gifts that they use only for their benefit. They teach, but they do not practice! (Mt 23,3; 1Cor 13,2-3). Thus, this parable calls the attention of those who seek their security in legal observance, without recognizing that true security is in God who loved first (1Jn 4,19). “God is my rock, strength, shield and freedom” (Ps 18,3). And the believer must be a rock for his brothers (Cf. Mt 16,18).

*When Jesus finished this speech, people were amazed at how he taught, because he did so with authority and not as their teachers of the Law (Mt 7, 28-29).*

**Second Speech: Missionary Sermon (Mt 10).** After the invitation, Jesus leaves the believer free to discern the proposal and make his decision. It is not easy, because it is about leaving behind the old paradigms and attitudes, to assume the new values that allow us to see life with new eyes. It is no longer the law, but mercy. To those who accept the invitation, Jesus proposes to follow the missionary path, the only way to build, slowly but inexorably, the new man.

In virtue of that missionary mandate, the Church is interested in those who do not know the Gospel, because it wants everyone to be saved and experience the love of the Lord, until it reaches every woman, man, old man, young man and child. All peoples and cultures have the right to receive the message of salvation, which is a gift from God for all (Pope Francis, World Missions Day 2016).

The missionary action contains a plausible temptation: to awaken that bourgeois spirit that places the recipient of the mission, as a means to satisfy the affective and emotional deficiencies of the missionary. In other words, the risk is to make the mission a task to fill my needs, maintaining control over what is done and about the interlocutors. Jesus warns and questions such an attitude. That’s why he asks close to him not to take anything, nor to plan anything. Trust should be placed only in the spirit of God who will say what needs to be done and said.

**The missionaries (10.5-16):** *The Kingdom is near! Heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons. You received it without paying, give it without charge. Do not bring gold, silver, clothing, supplies, cane or sandals, because the worker deserves his salary. Wherever you go, look for someone who is worth and stay there; when entering, wish for peace; If the family deserves it, they will receive it, otherwise it will return to you. If they do not receive you, shake off the dust from your feet. Be astute as a serpent and meek as a dove.*

To those who accept his invitation, Jesus invites them to announce the Kingdom and serve the people. Thus, a distinctive facet of the believer is the mission, seen not as a complement for the weekend, but as an essential part of a lifestyle embodied in the needs of the people. This implies a permanent exit to fulfill the entrusted task. Every day is a mission! The task is to announce the Kingdom of God, not to “sell oneself”, nor to propose ideologies or personal agendas. Announce the Kingdom, and only the Kingdom! From the revealed Word, in order for life and death to be transformed.

The mission implies announcing the Kingdom of God, salvation for man, cultures and society. In the mission, it is given and received free of charge; power is renounced, to live a humble pilgrimage; it is shared with everyone, especially the oppressed, the struggles and illusions; it is lived in freedom, not to make sacrifices, but to live the Grace that gives meaning to life. In a word, the mission demands detachment, renounces the desire to dominate, rejects the imperial mentality and overcomes the mental borders.

By sending them around the world, Jesus instructs his disciples on the way of mission: disposition, detachment, light luggage, confidence in the announcement, solidarity to share bread, home and life. In the mission, the message must be heard, received and announced as the Kingdom of a God that offers communion, peace and solidarity. This implies a possible risk: contempt, persecution, derogatory treatment. The believer has to face this danger and not give in to social and even ecclesial, pressure that styles hatred, rejection, and slander. You must follow the mission, live with coherence and confidence that you are not alone! Often, bold witness is the seed of conversion, a spark of freedom.

**Persecuted Missionaries (10.17-40):** *You will be hated for my cause, but if you stand firm you will be saved. If the owner of the house is called a demon, what will they not say about you? But do not be afraid. Is not a bird sold for a few cents? But it falls on the ground without the Father's permission. As for you, even your hair is numbered. To whom it is in my side, I will be on his side; whoever denies me, I will deny him. I have not come to bring peace, but sword. He who does not carry his cross is not worthy of me. He who puts his life before him will lose it, and he who loses it will find it.*

Of this second part two warnings draw attention: the persecution and the invitation to not be afraid (x 3). It seems that suffering marks

the life of the believer who lives his conviction, but he should not worry about it. Rather, he should be seriously concerned if he is not persecuted, if his life becomes only satisfactions.

The invitation to “not be afraid”, of its own, seeks to ensure that the believer does not pervert the mission, ceasing to act out of fear of slander or persecution. No matter how big the lie, the truth always wins! Do not be afraid to tell the truth! Today, for example, the press tends to distort the facts, and makes appear as criminal who proclaims the truth and can sacralize who is undoubtedly oppressor. The conviction of the believer leads him to defy the one who lies, defames, tortures, kills. They can kill the body, but not the freedom, and that is the strength that distinguishes the new man. The only fear that the believer must have is to deny the truth and get away from the brother.

On the other hand, the believer must bear witness to the cause that moves his life: Jesus. “He who declares himself for me before men, I will declare him before my Father.” Conviction implies courage in the face of persecution: “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” How to understand this statement? It must be made clear that this does not mean promoting division, but to assume that the conviction of life is usually a countercurrent attitude that becomes a “sign of contradiction” (Lk 2:34), in the family, community and society. When there are signs of renewal, it becomes a “sign of contradiction” for those who accustom an unjust peace and are so tamed that they will not allow themselves to be bothered.

However, conviction must be above comfort. You can not love the father/son more than the Kingdom. How to combine this order with the command to honor father and mother? (Mk 7, 10-12). Two observations: 1. The Kingdom was the supreme value for Jesus and 2. The socio-economic situation of the time led the family to close in on itself, denying its responsibility to society. But, a coexistence without community is like a pot without food... it disfigures love. In that context, then, “hating father and mother” means overcoming individualism, closed-mindedness, and making an option for community. And, opting for the community involves the cross: “I will glory in the cross of the Lord, through whom the world is crucified for me, as I am crucified to the world” (Gal 6,14). Carrying the cross supposes to break with the unjust system and be generous to give oneself completely to the other. This experience is not a personal one, but the fruit of the experience of love: “Who receives you, receives me...”

In concluding this sermon, Jesus speaks of the reward: “He who gives a little child a drink will not lose his reward.” In this sentence there is a significant sequence: the believer is recognized for his testimony, be-

havior and solidarity with the child. The Kingdom is a building made of bricks; despising a brick puts the building at risk.

*When Jesus finished giving instructions, he left to teach in their cities (Mt 11,1).*

**Third Speech: the sermon of the kingdom (Mt 13).** The third speech makes explicit the theme that should be treated in the missionary task: the Kingdom of God. The believer who accepts the invitation and begins to live his mission must speak only of the Kingdom of God. The particularity of this sermon of Jesus is that it explains the essence of the Kingdom of God through seven parables. The parable is a simple story, whose purpose is to convey a teaching in an understandable way. "Jesus preached using parables, that is, living examples, images taken from ordinary life, giving them rich and comprehensive contents. Some believed and others did not. Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God with tact and using parables in which, without hiding that he was saying new things, he incited the listener to be interested, and warned him: "Who has ears, let him hear!". The one who has a heart ready for conversion understands and rejects sin (Cases, 2017). This Kingdom of God is an offer that implies letting God be the only one who directs the life of the believer. You cannot serve God and money. If there is transparency of spirit, the other is neighbor, brother who is cared for and defended... But, if what prevails is money, the other is a rival that must be mastered and exploited. Thus, Jesus calls to announce to the world two options, and each one is free to choose one, with freedom, but with responsibility to assume the consequence.

**The sower.** *Grains fall on the road, the birds come and eat them; others fall among stones, sprout, but since there is no depth, the sun rises, burns and dries them; others fall among thorns, grow and drown; others fall on good soil and produce harvest, 100, 60 and 30.*

**The wheat and the darnel.** *A man sows seed, but while he sleeps, his enemy sows darnel. The wheat grows, and also the darnel. The workers say to the boss: "Lord, you planted seed, where did the darnel come from?" He replied: "It is the work of the enemy." The workers ask: "Do you want us to tear it?" "No, because by removing the darnel, they can tear the wheat. Let them grow until the harvest, and then they will cut the weeds and throw them into the fire, and the wheat we will keep in the cellars.*

**The mustard seed.** *The mustard seed is the smallest of the seeds, but when it grows it is larger than a tree, so that the birds perch on its branches. This is the Kingdom.*

**Yeast.** *The Kingdom is like the yeast that is put to the flour to ferment the dough.*

**The treasure.** *The Kingdom is like a hidden treasure; whoever discovers it sells everything and buys it.*

**The Pearl.** *The Kingdom is like a pearl that a man finds, sells what he has and buys it.*

**Net.** *The Kingdom is like a net that collects fish, the big ones are useful; the little ones are thrown.*

The unique theme of the mission is the Kingdom. Having this clear, helps not to disperse in varied, broad and ineffective issues. There are 7 parables, although only two are explained (the sower and the wheat and the darnel), because they constitute the transverse axis to understand the other five parables.

To seed was a familiar image in Israel. When the rain arrived, the earth was scratched and the seed was thrown. Jesus collects this image to speak of a sower who, although he identifies with himself, is also the believer who preaches the Kingdom, in the style of Jesus who does not flaunt his condition, but acts as a servant (Cf. Flp 2,6-11). The seed is the Word of God; the field is the world. Therefore, the announcement of the Kingdom is made from the inspired Word, which must travel the entire world, until reaching the millions of people who still don't know the commandment of mutual love. Thus, believers are part of a Church in and for the world. Some will accept the Kingdom, others will not. But, the work of the believer remains the same: to sow the Word. Harvest is second moment and corresponds to Jesus.

An interesting fact: there is nothing wrong with the seed. The harvest occurs in the land where this seed falls. That is, the Word is good; Whether or not it harvests depends on human freedom to receive it or not. And, even if 75% of the seed is lost, the Word is so rich, that some fruit will give, even if it is very small. The earth is of four types: 1. The one next to the road: the seed is eaten by the birds (who knows the Kingdom, but does not accept it); 2. The one that is shallow and full of stones: the seed does not germinate (whoever hears the word, but does not allow himself to be questioned, can be affectionate, emotional, but does not



commit himself); 3. The one that is full of thorns: the seed drowns (who lets himself be saturated until he loses faith); 4. The good earth: whoever hears and lives the Word bears fruit.

The parable of the wheat and the darnel highlights that in the world there are two types of people: the good and the bad (Jn 8,43-45). When the Word is not accepted, one tends to see the other not as a brother, but as a rival to dominate: "In this is manifested the son of God and the son of the devil: he who does not do justice and does not love his brother, it is not of God" (1Jn 3,10).

But, Jesus does not say that the bad one must be destroyed. That is not the task! The wheat and the tares must grow together. Lest by fighting the bad the good be hurt! In fact, both have similarities on a day-to-day basis; Christians who are darnel and unbelievers who live like wheat. It is the work that differentiates them: "It is right before God to pay with tribulation to the troublemaker. And to you who are afflicted, give them rest, when the Lord appears from heaven... give retribution to those who do not know God, nor obey the gospel of Christ" (2 Thess 1,6-8). By going to church, we are not on the right path. "Every tree that does not bear fruit is cut and thrown into the fire. So, by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says, 'Lord', will enter the Kingdom of God, but he who does the will of the Father. Many will say that day: Lord, we prophesied in your name, cast out demons and performed miracles. Then I will say: I do not know them!" (Mt 7,19-23).

Jesus compares the Kingdom with the mustard seed. Being the smallest, it grows until it becomes a tree capable of welcoming birds. To further clarify his comparison, Jesus argues that the believer should concentrate on the essentials: plant the seed, make it germinate and let it become a tree. This is the Kingdom of God. Another comparison is of everyday life: the Kingdom resembles a woman who mixes flour and yeast and becomes a mass that grows alone. The curious thing is that the yeast, for the Jew, is impure, and was removed from the bread during the Passover feast. In the context, the yeast symbolizes the antagonism to the official religion: Even moral transgression helps to build the Kingdom!

The Kingdom is also compared to a treasure and a pearl that, when found, one sells everything to acquire them. Jesus uses these two examples to indicate that for the Kingdom it is worthwhile to renounce temporal things. In a world that puts no limits to pleasure and waste, nor values the freedom of being, it is good to like eternal things. The treasure must be sought, and once found, everything must be given up to acquire it! Finally, the parable of the net, very similar to wheat and tares, shows

that there are good and bad fish, you have to choose what is good, and discard what is counterproductive.

*When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. (Mt 13,53).*

**Fourth Speech: Community sermon (Mt 18).** The teaching of Jesus is coming to an end. In this fourth speech, the Master enters fully to deal with the theme of coherence that must be made clear by the missionary believer who announces the Kingdom of God. What good is it to announce the Kingdom, if there is no testimony of it? All the teaching of Jesus is oriented to build the Kingdom from the person himself; from there it can radiate to the world. The only revolution is to be revolutionized!

The believer must always act from the coherence between what he says, what he does, what he expects and what he achieves; Physical coherence, emotional, gestural and consistency between the judgement, the opinion and the statement. Seen this way, it is not easy to be a Christian, because it is an attitude that demands transparency in the relationship with God and with the brother. Hence, this discourse focuses on community relations. To the brother, we must respect him, take care of him, correct him, and welcome him with warmth, justice and rectitude. The believer knows that the Church is not a private or private endeavor. But a faithful and supportive commitment to which we committed ourselves.

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**The greatest (18.2-14).** *If you are not like a child, you will not enter the Kingdom. The one who receives a child, receives me. The one that makes fall to a boy, it is better to tie to the neck a stone and to drown in the sea. If your hand causes you to fall, cut it off; it is better to enter eternal life without a hand than to be thrown into the fire. What happens if a man has a hundred sheep and loses one? Do not leave the 99 to look for the lost one? And if he finds it, he feels no more joy than that for the 99.*

Jesus uses two figures to talk about communion: a boy and a sheep. The Kingdom becomes a reality with community life! In the community the helpless is the first. This reverses the scale that gives primacy to those who have titles, assets or knowledge. "Let the children come to me; do not prevent it" (Mk 10,14). The point is not that the child approaches, but that the adult does not impede their closeness!

If they do not become like children, they will not enter the Kingdom. What is the meaning of this verse? Jesus is talking about conversion, not regression. It is not about having a childish attitude, but about seeing life with new eyes: "If you are not born again, you will not enter the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3: 3). The conversion implies new birth; being born again implies spiritual rebirth; reborn implies becoming a child: "He who receives a child in my name receives me. (v. 4) Stumbling is synonymous with sinning, and before that, "it is better to enter into eternal life lame, than to have feet and be thrown into the fire" (verses 7-9). Jesus uses this simile to say that conversion implies radicalism in the renunciation of evil (Mt 15,18-19).

But, not everyone has the strength to make that leap to conversion, once and for all. Some are timorous. This does not mean that the community should marginalize them, but look for them, because "the Son of Man has come to save what is lost". In Lc 15, the emphasis is on finding what is lost. Here, in Mt 18, the emphasis is on saving the lost, especially if they are the little ones (see v. 14).

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**Community living (18,15-22).** *If your brother sins, point out his fault. If he listens to you, you won a brother; If he does not listen to you, take one or two people as witnesses. If he does not listen, inform the assembly. If he does not listen to the church, consider it a pagan. What you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. If two agree to ask for something, my Father will give it to you. Where two or three meet in my Name, there I am. Forgive not 7, but 70 times 7.*

This section explains that, in the conflict, the church must seek forgiveness among brothers. Here are the terms "brother" (gr. *Adelphos*) and "church" (gr. *Ekklesia*) (v. 15 and 17). This implies that we are brothers, and not just members of the Church. Therefore, the relationship, rather than the sum of ideas or dreams, is a communion of brothers! Even when the other has committed a crime against himself or against his brother; even if the sin is against us. We have the responsibility to take the initiative and seek a solution to it. We do not have to murmur, but confront, but win the offender. This implies not confronting the offender to the point of driving him further away: "If anyone were to be found in fault, you who are spiritual, restore him with a spirit of meekness" (Gal 6,1).

Now, it is not easy to love the offender or restore the relationship. Even if the correction were for a known offense, care must be taken that the offender does not suffer a painful public exposure that affects his dignity.

Now, what kind of sin can be justified? “Do not associate with someone who calls himself a brother and is a fornicator, greedy, idolater, gossiper, drunkard, thief” (1Cor 5,11). That is to say, every act that ends up being scandalous for the brother, which does not entail repentance or sense of shame. Jesus does not call to confront the offender of “great” offenses, but of all kinds of crimes of which there is no pain: “If you bring your gift to the altar, and you remember that your brother has something against you, leave it and go to be reconciled; then present your offering” (Mt 5, 23-24). The initiative must be taken if the brother has something against us, justified or not!

All this must be done in a personal capacity, without including the community. It is only involved when there is no response from part of the offender. Then witnesses should be sought (Deut 19,15) to guarantee that there is no unjust accusation (1 Tim 5,19). Thus, it is discerned with justice, not necessarily the offense, but the attitude at the time of correcting, not only the offender, but the offended one. The goal is not to blame, but to restore the sinner. If the issue is not resolved, the witnesses will give their testimony in front of the Church, and “if he does not hear the Church, consider him a pagan.” This language is rare in Jesus, who is open to evangelizing the pagans (Mt 8,5-13; 11,16-19). Even a tax collector is an apostle (Mt 9, 9-13). It seems that here, “pagan” refers to the non-believer (Cf. Mt 5,47; 6,7,32; 9,10; 10,18; 11,19; 20,19). “Consider him a pagan,” then, it could mean leaving it as “non-believer”, but in no way condemn it, because the goal is to restore communion. Although it seems that the Church expels the offender, in reality it only recognizes that he has been excluded from the community. The hope is that, feeling out of communion, he seeks correction to return to the brotherhood.



**He who does not forgive (18.23-35).** *Miserable servant, I forgave you your debt, should you not have compassion as I had of you? He became so angry that he imprisoned him until he paid his debt. My Father will do the same if you do not forgive your brother.*

Jesus completes the theme of reconciliation. The believer has been born again, is part of the Church. This new reality is not an easy task, because Jesus' proposal is “to be holy as the Father is holy,” and that means living as a family. In that sense, Peter's question: “How many times should I forgive?”, Jesus deserves a categorical answer: “Not seven, but seventy times seven.”

In the parable of the two debtors, who owes ten thousand talents, has an impossible debt to pay, but deserves forgiveness. That

same person is not able to forgive just one hundred denarii, it is outrageous. That is why the reaction of the Lord is understood: “Bad Servant, I forgave you your debt... you should have mercy, as I had with you”. Thus, this parable teaches that there is an ethical requirement to forgive offenses, great or small, because God forgives without condition. Whom he does not forgive, He sends you to jail to pay his debt. To throw to the jail means to be imprisoned in the desire of revenge or prejudice. “Be good to one another, forgive each other as God forgives you” (Eph 4,32).

*When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan (Mt 19,1).*

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Fifth Speech: eschatological sermon (Mt 24-25). We reached the end of Jesus' pedagogical itinerary. The process that began with an invitation to be missionaries, who preach the Kingdom and witness it with a deep community life, concludes with what this journey of conversion of mind and heart means. An award that, in believer terms, is eternal salvation. It seems that having arrived at this moment already means coherence. However, in this speech it is striking that one may have accepted the invitation, may have spent his life missionarying and witnessing, but having done so with minimal effort! That is to say, this speech makes us realize that it is not enough to be good, it has to be a superlative measure. What San Ignacio de Loyola called the *Magis*<sup>5</sup>.

**Signs of His coming (24,3-41).** *One nation will fight against another; there will be hunger and earthquakes. You will be denounced, tortured and murdered... so much evil, that love will cool in many. But whoever stands firm will be saved and the Good News will be proclaimed and heard by the nations; then it will be the end. In the days of anguish, the sun will darken, the moon will lose its brightness and the stars will fall, and they will see the Son of Man arrive with power and glory. When you see these things, know that the time is near. Truly I say to you, heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will not pass away. But the day and the hour nobody knows, but the Father.*

En el último discurso se responde a la inquietud: ¿Cuándo será el final y cuáles serán las señales? La respuesta de Jesús es lógica: la señal del “fin del “mundo” y el surgimiento de una nueva tierra será con la llegada del Hijo de Hombre. Hay que estar atentos y evitar el engaño que se da en

cada época, en especial cuando hay tribulación: “False prophets and false teachers will arise who will introduce heresies, denying even the Lord... (Cf. 2Pe 2,1). Thus, a cause for concern is the false teacher, whose teaching is criticized, because “many will come in my name, saying: I Am, and will deceive all.”

Jesús dice que habrá guerras y desastres naturales, pero no son señales del fin, sino muestras del deterioro de las relaciones humanas. Por eso, no hay que dar espacio a los rumores, pues “¡aun no es el fin!”. Guerras y terremotos ha habido siempre a lo largo de la historia. Tampoco deben preocupar las tensiones que surgen, pues “serán odiados por mi causa” (v. 9). Menos aún nos debe asustar que haya enfriamiento del amor, dada la tensión reinante (v. 12). When evil increases, many will stop living love, and that is a sign that the end is near! But “whoever perseveres to the end, will be saved.” And the Pastor’s wish is that if he starts with 100 sheep, he ends with 100. Salvation for all if, beyond human failure, they remain firm in love!

No existen varias formas de salvación, sino un solo camino: el amor llevado a la plenitud en la cruz. Eso es lo que expresa la parábola de la higuera: “cuando echa hojas, saben que el verano está cerca”. The fig tree represents the love that bears fruit and announces the end (Cf. Jer 24). Paul reminds us that in difficult times the love of God who wants to save the people acts: “In the propitious time I heard you, the day of salvation I helped you. Now is the propitious time, the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6,2).

**The prudent virgins (25,1-13).** *Ten young women go to meet the groom. 5 sensible and 5 foolish. The foolish ones do not have spare oil; the sensible ones do. As the groom delays, they fall asleep. At midnight the groom arrives and they must go to meet him. Then the foolish ones say to the sensible ones: “Give us oil, because our lamps go out”. The sensible answer: “There is not for all; go buy”. While they go, the groom arrives, and those who are ready enter the party. And the door closes. When the others arrive, call, but they are not opened. Therefore, be awake, because you do not know the day or the hour.*

The vital space of the woman is the house, taking care of the children and carrying out the domestic tasks. Important occasion of the day was to go to the well for water; there they met with other women. From time to time, the routine was broken by a wedding, birth, rite of initiation, funeral, etc. The wedding was very significant, as it was an event that lasted several days and included a banquet, dances and games. Jesus takes

this experience to tell the parable of The Ten Virgins. Five were sensible and five foolish, which reminds us of the wise builder and the other who was foolish (Cf. Mt 7,24-2, who build their house on rock and sand, respectively (see above). In the present account, sensible and fools virgins are invited to the wedding and all fall asleep while waiting for the groom's arrival. That is, up to this point they are on equal terms. The parable centers the narration on the waiting for a delayed groom. It is there where the sensible ones differ from the foolish ones: they are cautious and have spare oil, foreseeing that the boyfriend will be late.

Thus, being ready by the time the groom arrives is the crux of the text. That is, the arrival of the groom is the signal that starts the party. The passport to enter the banquet is to be personally prepared for when the door opens. Thus, only five manage to enter the wedding because they are prepared for the occasion. They foresaw that the groom could delay and they had the precaution of having reserve oil.

This parable is written by Matthew at the end of the first century, when the community begins to tire because of the delay of the Parousia. In spite of the clarity of the message, there is no unanimity to define the type of narration that is this composition. Jeremiah sees it as a teaching of the historical Jesus; Bornkamm sees it as a story of the early church. Dodd classifies it as a parable and Bultmann as an allegory. (Donfried, 1974). Let's start with the hermeneutical principle that holds that every text is addressed to a specific audience, which is intended to teach something. In that case, this narrative would be a parable that shows a concatenated sequence: *wedding, virgins, lamps, oil, delay, sleep, scream, wake up, party, closing door.*

If we make an allegorical analysis, we can say that the virgins symbolize the church that awaits the return of the Lord; the groom is Jesus Christ; the wedding is the feast of the Lamb (Rev 19.9); the delay of the groom symbolizes the anxiety lived by the community of the time, and the arrival is the full fulfillment of the Parousia. The closed door is the judgment that causes the foolish to be rejected for their lack of waiting spirit. A problem lies in interpreting the oil. What does it mean? Is it faith, piety, works, prayer? The answer comes from the analysis of four parables that Matthew offers: the faithful servant is working when the Lord returns (24,45-51); uses corrected resources correctly (25,14-30); takes care of the needy (25,31-46) and, now, has reserve oil to hold the wait.

Thus, to be prepared -to have oil, means to work faithfully, take care of the received gifts, be a good administrator of time and goods in charge, take care of the needy. In a word, it is he who fulfills the teaching of Jesus (see Mt 5-7). To do this, is to be prepared for the return of the

Lord, of whom neither the day nor the hour is known. “At midnight they heard a cry: the husband has arrived” (v. 6), and the sensible ones entered the party, while the foolish ones lost the opportunity to enter. It is common the temptation to criticize the fools of being clumsy. However, in the text they are not criticized, but encouraged to look for oil. The problem is that it means losing valuable time, to the point that the groom arrives and invites the party to those present. Then the door was closed (v. 10). The foolish arrive and bring oil, but it is too late; the door will not open anymore (v. 11-12). It is too late to ask for mercy.

**Parable of the talents (25,14-30).** *A man when traveling gathers his servants and entrusts their goods to them. To one he gave 5 talents, to another 2 and to another 1. Each according to his capacity. The one who received 5 negotiated and won another five; the one who received 2 won another two. But the one who received 1 hid the money. After a while the Lord came and settled the accounts with them. The one who received 5 presented another 5; the Lord congratulated him for being good and faithful; the one that received two, delivered another 2; the Lord congratulated him for being good and faithful. Finally, the one who received a talent came and says: “Lord, I was afraid and I hid your money; here it is”. The Lord told him: “bad servant! If you know that I harvest where I do not sow, you should put my money in the bank, to receive it with interest. “And he took away the talent and gave it to the first. The one who produces will be given, and the one who will not be taken away from what he has. He sent the worthless servant into darkness, where there is weeping.*

Jesus advances in his teaching. Now he tells a simple story that invites us to discern fidelity. Betrayal brings a reprimand, loss of entrusted task and condemnation, far from the presence of God. It should be noted that the talents are given to the servants according to their ability. In Luke's parallel it is said that the Lord instructs them to do business with that money, but in Matthew it gives them freedom so that each one does what he thinks fit. Once again the “time” factor appears. Jesus clarifies that the parousia will not be soon, so believers should keep working without rest (Mt 25,16-17), because the return will be at an unexpected moment (Mt 24,44).

On the other hand, having a talent does not ensure salvation. Moreover, in one case it leads to condemnation. Something similar to the parable of the sower (Mt 13,3-9.18-23, Cf. supra). We have all been given a talent and from it, and only from it, we will be asked for. The first two servants are clear about their task, and that is why they start working im-

mediately. It's not talent, it's work! There it is understood that the third servant is accused of laziness and is kept until what he has (Cf. Mt 25,29, Cf. Mt 13:12, Mk 4,25, Lk 8,18, 19,26).

The third servant presents his excuse: the Lord is a tough man, and this led him to be afraid, that's why he did nothing with the trusted money. Assuming that the servant was right, why did not he motivate himself to seek a return for his employer? Why did he not put the talent in the hands of a banker to invest it, and thus obtain some interest? There are characteristics that distinguish this servant from the other two: fidelity (the first two) vs laziness (the third). The first two are "good", an adjective that is used in a moral sense, as something useful or beneficial (Cf. Mt 7,17-18, Lk 14,34, 16,25). The lazy slave is the person who refuses to work with the talents that God provides to build the Kingdom of God. The way in which some believers live their faith denotes that they "bury" their talent, arguing fear, where they only summarize laziness. It may be that you are not like the first two slaves, but like the third.

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**The final judgment (25,31-46).** *The nations will be separated: sheep on the right and goats on the left. Then He will say to the sheep: "Come blessed of my Father and take possession of the kingdom, because I was hungry and you fed me; thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you received me; I was naked and you dressed me; sick and in jail and you visited me. They will say: "When did we saw you hungry and we gave you food, thirsty and we gave you drink, stranger and we received you, naked and we dressed you, sick or prisoner and we visited you? The king will say: "When you did it with the smallest of my brothers, they did it with me".*

*He will say unto the goats: "Get away from me, because I was hungry and you did not feed me; thirsty and you did not give me to drink; I was a stranger and you did not receive me; naked and you did not dress me; sick and prisoner and you did not visit me. "They will say: "When did we see you hungry, thirsty, naked, outsider, sick or imprisoned and we did not help you?" The king will say: "When you did not do it with the smallest one".*

How can God condemn his creatures? How can there be heaven and hell? There are two fairly detailed references to the final judgment: Rev. 20 and Mt 25. In Revelation, after the dragon's defeat (v.10) and the elimination of evil, a throne appears before which heaven and earth flee (v. 11). and the dead are raised to be judged according to their works (verses 6 and

12) written in the book (v. 12; Cf. Dn 7,9s). Mt 25,31ss ends the series of five speeches of Jesus. The Son of Man gathers humanity, and divides it between sheep and goats, according to their behavior towards the needy. Jesus, the Son of Man, has the power to judge the peoples of the world.

Some are on the right and others on the left. On the right there is happiness and meaning; left sadness and no-meaning. What marks the adhesion to one or the other side is solidarity with the poor. That is God's choice since the creation of the world! An important theological statement is that salvation is the result of attitude in relation to the little one. More than judgment, what will happen that day is ethical discernment, in a personal way to each believer. The identification of Jesus with the needy has several consequences: Jesus becomes poor and is present in every poor person in the world; you cannot separate faith in God and love for the needy, because then faith becomes empty; only in the poor is Jesus known, and he can mark life and ward off mediocrity. So, how do we imagine the final judgment? For the believer it seems an apathetic subject; It gives the feeling of an excess of confidence: "Jesus Christ already died for me on the cross; the way of salvation is expeditious". However, the judgment is for everyone, especially for those who have accepted the invitation made in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). What a commitment to be a disciple! Nobody condemns; each one receives the mercy he has lived. No one is asked about the quality of their faith or their practice of piety, but rather for mercy and solidarity with the poor. In fact, except for the book of life in Rev. 20, the reference to final judgment does not mention faith but "works."



*When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, "As you know, the Passover is two days away –and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." (Mt 26,1-2).*

## Final considerations (Pérez, 2017)

Dewey's contribution to progressive pedagogy helps us to reaffirm that every interlocutor (disciple, student) does not begin his training as a clean slate where the teacher can write his ideas. The interlocutor is an active self that, as a result of the educational task, establishes rules of behavior that lead them to act in such a way that they are able to see the relationship between the result and the followed method.

Only through observation, reflection and verification can the disciple/student expand and/or rectify what he/she knows. In the development of the pedagogical proposal of the Gospel of Matthew we see that it is pos-

sible to learn from a concept, value or attitude that until now was unknown. Then, the teacher's task is not of "authority", but of guidance with sufficient knowledge of his interlocutor, his needs, experiences, abilities and knowledge. The Master, Dewey would say, does not dictate plans, but rather participates in the discussion where, as a whole, it is decided what to do. There, it is essential to respect freedom, individuality and work in groups, in such a way that social behavior is combined with one's mental attitude.

We believe that education is a necessity of life, insofar as it ensures cultural transmission. Even more so when formal education is specialized. This study has allowed us to observe the need to maintain contact with direct experience, creating a continuity between theory and practice.

Today, it is very complicated to predict how civilization will be like in fifty years. Hence, it is difficult to prepare the disciple/student for specific conditions. Preparing for the future life implies giving mastery over oneself, training for a quick and full use of one's abilities. And this, certainly, borders on the utopian.

However, the teaching of Jesus shows that God is just and that the discernment/choice between good and evil is born of human freedom. We live a crisis typical of postmodernity, unable to discern the good and evil inherent in human actions. And this has become a personal, social and cultural position, difficult to overcome.

From each of Jesus' speeches emanates the challenge of assuming the responsibility of building a Kingdom full of justice, solidarity and mercy with the brother, especially the most needy, the little one. This, in the end, it means fidelity to God and fidelity to the personal vocation. Life is not a game. The believer must keep in mind that he has a responsibility and that he must give an account of it.

The word of God is alive and effective, more penetrating than double-edged sword, and penetrates to where the soul and the spirit, the bones and the marrow divide, making a discernment of the most intimate desires and thoughts. There is no creature whose light does not penetrate; everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of the one to whom we will give an account (Heb 4, 12-13).

God gives us His Word, and demands our word! If we do not hear the voice of God, we will not have fullness of life and freedom. If we do it, then it will be the triumph of love made action. Not a sentimental love, but a concrete love loaded with bread. Love that smiles, walks, welcomes, warms the brother. So, listen to the call, change obsolete ideas, announce the Kingdom, live the brotherhood and produce more than you have re-

ceived! Then you will hear a voice that says to you: “Come, blessed of my Father, to the feast I have prepared for you”!

## Notes

- 1 John Dewey (1859-1952), American philosopher, psychologist and pedagogue who permeated his work with three Hegelian traits: the taste for the logical scheme, the interest in the socio-psychological theme and the common root of man with nature. He proposed the unification of thought and action, theory and practice. He had great influence on the development of contemporary pedagogical progressivism. Online: <http://www.monografias.com/trabajos81/john-dewey/john-dewey.shtml#ixzz4x0RXynt9> Access: October 29, 2017.
- 2 The term used for the retribution is *misthós* (salary). It appears eleven times in Matthew (Cf. Mc 9,41; Lc 6,23,35). The preaching of Jesus, according to the synoptics, reflects the idea of retribution, but outside the automatism and post *mortem* view. According to Matthew, to the persecuted Jesus promises them a reward (5,12), equal to those who welcome the prophets and the righteous (10,41) or give a small drink (10,42). The reward promised by Jesus is the Kingdom of Heaven (5,10). The workers of the vineyard will receive the same salary, whatever their work (20,1-15), because they were able to leave home, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children and fields (Cf. 19, 28-29).
- 3 All the biblical texts in this article are taken from the Latin American Bible.
- 4 The pseudonym is to attribute a literary work to a fictional character. For the 2nd century AD there was a Christian canon that, although lacking in codification, was considered authentic. There were pseudonymous texts of the four New Testament types: Gospels, Acts, Epistle and Revelation, accepted without problem, since the interval that separates the author-assumption from the author-real was not so great, so the reader accepted it as a true source (Douglas, 2000).
- 5 *Magis* in Latin means “more”. Ignatius of Loyola used this word to say that faith grows in friendship with God and service to the brother. The *Magis* looks at the cross in which “love without end” is revealed; It symbolizes the path that leads to full life: Knowing, Loving and Following the Master of Nazareth



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