From Fr. Jason

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we celebrate the feast of St. Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church, on September 3rd, the Lord invites us to contemplate the life of a man who, in the midst of a crumbling world, became a living icon of Christ's humility and a herald of the Gospel. We are called to see in St. Gregory not only a historical figure but a brother who walked the path of conversion, carrying the cross with joy and proclaiming the kerygma - the Good News of Jesus Christ - to a world in desperate need of hope. His life speaks to us today, urging us to the mission of the Church and to live as a community of disciples.

St. Gregory, born around 540 in Rome, was a man of great gifts, yet he surrendered them all to the Lord. A successful public official and prefect of Rome, he heard the call of God and left behind worldly ambition to embrace monastic life. But the Lord had greater plans. Called from the cloister to serve as Pope, Gregory took up the mantle of leadership in a time of chaos - plagues, invasions, and division threatened the Church and society. Yet, in his humility, he called himself *Servus Servorum Dei* - the Servant of the Servants of God. This title is not just a name but a way of life, a call for each of us to serve as Christ served, washing the feet of our brothers and sisters (John 13:14).

We are reminded that the Christian life is a journey of kenosis, of emptying ourselves for others. St. Gregory lived this truth. **He did not cling to his own desires but allowed the Holy Spirit to lead him, even when the cross was heavy**. His example challenges us: Are we willing to let go of our plans, our comforts, to follow where God calls us? Are we ready to serve our families, our communities, and even strangers, as servants of the Gospel?

As a Doctor of the Church, St. Gregory's teachings continue to nourish us. His homilies on the Scriptures, especially on the Book of Job and the Gospels, reveal a pastor who loved the Word of God and sought to make it alive for his people. He preached with simplicity and depth, calling all - rich and poor, clergy and laity - to conversion. We too are formed by the Word, which pierces our hearts in the liturgy. Gregory's writings remind us that the Scriptures are not mere stories but the living voice of God, calling us to repentance and to a deeper encounter with Christ.

His famous *Pastoral Rule* remains a guide for shepherds and all who lead in the Church. He urged pastors to be men of prayer, humility, and courage, always pointing to Christ rather than themselves. St. Gregory teaches us that true leadership is not about power but about laying down our lives, as Jesus did (John 10:11).

St. Gregory's heart burned with missionary zeal. He is often called the "Apostle of the English" for sending St. Augustine of Canterbury to evangelize the Anglo-Saxons. Tradition tells us that Gregory, seeing fair-haired slaves in the Roman market, was moved to compassion, calling them "not Angles, but angels," and resolved to bring them the Gospel. Gregory's vision reminds us that the mission is not optional - it is the heartbeat of the Church, born from the love of Christ who seeks out the lost (Luke 19:10).

In a world much like Gregory's - marked by uncertainty, division, and suffering - we are called to be missionaries of hope. Whether in our neighborhoods, workplaces, or distant lands, we carry the same kerygma: Jesus Christ is risen, and He offers eternal life to all who turn to Him. Let us ask ourselves: How are we responding to the call to evangelize? Are we open to being sent, like St. Augustine, to those who do not yet know Christ?

St. Gregory's love for the liturgy and sacred music is another gift to the Church. He reformed the Church's worship, ensuring it reflected the beauty and majesty of God. The Gregorian Chant, named in his honor, lifts our hearts to heaven, uniting us in praise. We too experience the power of singing the psalms and hymns, allowing the Spirit to move us to worship. Gregory understood that the liturgy is not just a ritual but an encounter with the living God, where we are transformed and sent forth to live what we celebrate.

Let us learn from Gregory to make our lives a liturgy, a constant offering to God. In our daily struggles, in our joys and sorrows, let us sing the new song of salvation (Psalm 96:1), trusting that God is working all things for our good (Romans 8:28)!

Peace,