

Thursday 7th in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 9,41-50): Jesus said to his disciples: «If anyone gives you a drink of water because you belong to Christ and bear his name, truly, I say to you, he will not go without reward. If anyone should cause one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble and sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a great millstone around his neck. If your hand makes you fall into sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a hand than with two hands to go to hell, to the fire that never goes out. And if your foot makes you fall into sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a foot than with both feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye makes you fall into sin, tear it out! It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than, keeping both eyes, to be thrown into hell where the worms that eat them never die, and the fire never goes out. The fire itself will preserve them. Salt is a good thing; but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another».

«If anyone gives you a drink of water because you belong to Christ, truly, I say to you, he will not go without reward»

Fr. Xavier PARÉS i Saltor
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Today, the proclaimed Gospel is somewhat difficult to understand for Jesus' words are certainly very harsh: «If your hand makes you fall into sin, cut it off! (...). And if your eye makes you fall into sin, tear it out!» (Mk 9:43-47). Jesus is very demanding with those of us who are his followers. But Jesus simply wants to emphasize that we have to learn how to give up those things that may hurt us, even though we like them, for they can be the cause of all sin and vice. St. Gregory wrote «we should not covet those things that only meet our material and sinful needs». Jesus expects us to be radical. In another part of the Gospel, it is written: «Whoever

finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it» (Mt 10:39).

On the other hand, Jesus' demand is actually a demand for love and maturity. We shall not remain without our reward. What will make our deeds meaningful must always be our love: we should know how to offer a drink of water to whomever is in need of it, but not because of any personal interest but, simply, out of love. We must discover Jesus in those more needy and poor. Jesus only severely denounces and condemns those who do evil and shock us, those who make the little ones relinquish the infinite goodness and grace of God.

Finally, we all have to overcome the fire proof. It is the fire of love and charity that redeems us from our sins, and gives us the salt that provides that salty good taste to our love, to our service, to our charity. In our prayers and in the Eucharist we, Christians, must find the strength of faith and the salty good taste of Christ. We shall not remain without our reward!