

Friday of the Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 5:33-39): The scribes and Pharisees said to Jesus, "The disciples of John the Baptist fast often and offer prayers, and the disciples of the Pharisees do the same; but yours eat and drink." Jesus answered them... "new wine must be poured into fresh wineskins..."

The "New Covenant"

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)

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Today, facing the Pharisaic ritualism, the "new wine" brings us to the panorama of the "renewed" Covenant of God with men. Before Israel's disloyalty, God reiterated the "Covenant", and finally, Christ sealed it in its "new" and "definitive" form. The Sinai Covenant was centered on two elements: 1. the "Blood Covenant" (the sacrificial blood from animals was sprinkled on the altar —God's symbol— and on the people); 2. God's word and the promise of Israel's obedience.

This promise was broken by Israel's "idolatry" and a number of repeated noncompliances, as shown in the Old Testament. The rupture seemed unavoidable when God sent His people into exile and the Temple was thrown open for destruction. But then, the hope of the "New Covenant" emerged, not based on the always fragile human loyalty, but on an inviolable obedience: that of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

—O Jesus, as a servant, You assume my disobedience in your "obedience unto death". Give me a "new" heart!