Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (*Mt* 23:1-12): Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people's shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them... Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven..."

Origen of the "Natural Law"

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, is not self-evident to recognize what is right in anthropological issues. Could there be a "Cathedra" acceptable to all? How can we discern between good and evil, between the real Law and the "apparent Law"? With regard to the dignity of man, of course, the “majority” principle is not enough.

In history, systems of law have almost always been based on religion. However, Christianity has never proposed a revealed “law” to the State and to society. Instead, it has pointed to nature and reason as the true sources of law; to the harmony of objective and subjective reason, which naturally presupposes that both spheres are rooted in the creative reason of God. Indeed, Christian theologians thereby aligned themselves with a philosophical and juridical movement that began to take shape in the 2nd century B.C., when the Social Natural Law (developed by the Stoic philosophers) came into contact with the Roman Law.

—Through this “providential” encounter, the juridical culture of the West was born, which is of key significance for the culture of mankind.