Wednesday of the Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 6:1-6.16-18): Jesus said to his disciples: “Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

“When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to others to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.”

“Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them”

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Jesus invites us to act for the glory of God, to please the Father, for that is precisely why we were created. The Catechism of the Church states: "God created everything for man, but man in turn was created to serve and love God and to offer all creation back to him." This is the meaning of our life and our honor: to please the Father, to please God. This is the witness Christ left us. May the heavenly Father bear witness to each of us as he did to his Son at his baptism: " This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17).

The lack of rectitude of intention would be especially grave and ridiculous if it occurred in actions such

as prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, since these are acts of piety and charity, that is, acts that—per se—are proper to the virtue of religion or acts performed for the love of God.

Therefore, "Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father" (Mt 6:1). How can we please God if what we seek from the outset is to be seen and to look good - first and foremost - before men? It's not that we must hide from men so they won't see us, but rather it's about directing our good works directly and foremost to God. It doesn't matter, nor is it bad, that others see us: quite the contrary, for we can build them up with a coherent witness to our actions.

But what does matter—and very much so! —is that we see God behind our actions. And, therefore, we must "examine our intention very carefully in everything we do, and not seek our own interests, if we want to serve the Lord" (Saint Gregory the Great).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “If the tiniest fire of divine love has been lit in you, then do not rush to make a parade of it. Do not take it out into the icy blast. Keep the furnace door shut on it so that it does not die out.” (Saint Charles Borromeo).

- “Any expression of penitence only has value in God's eyes if they are signs of sincerely repentant hearts. The true ‘reward’ is not the admiration of others but rather friendship with God.” (Benedict XVI)

- “Christ Jesus always did what was pleasing to the Father, and always lived in perfect communion with him. Likewise, Christ's disciples are invited to live in the sight of the Father ‘who sees in secret,’ (Mt 6:6) in order to become ‘perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (Mt 5:48).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 1693)