Tuesday of the Twelfth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 7:6.12-14): Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not give what is holy to dogs, or throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot, and turn and tear you to pieces. “Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the Law and the Prophets. “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few.”

“Enter through the narrow gate”

Fr. Lluís ROQUÉ i Roqué
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Today, Jesus gives us three important recommendations. However, we will focus our attention on the last one: “Enter through the narrow gate” (Mt 7:13) to attain fullness of life and be happy always, to avoid the road to perdition and eternal condemnation.

If you look around you and at your own life, you will clearly see that everything worthwhile comes at a price, and that anything of a certain quality is subject to the Master's recommendation: as the Church Fathers have so profoundly stated, “Through the cross all the mysteries that contribute to our salvation are fulfilled” (Saint John Chrysostom). An elderly woman who had suffered greatly in her life once said to me, as she lay on her deathbed: “Father, those who do not taste the cross do not desire heaven; without the cross, there is no heaven.”

All of this contradicts our fallen nature, even though it has been redeemed. Therefore, in addition to confronting our natural way of being, we will have to go against the current because of the environment of well-being that is based on materialism and unbridled sensual pleasure, which seeks —at the cost of ceasing to be— to have more and more, to obtain maximum pleasure.

Following Jesus —who said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (Jn 8:12)— we realize that the Gospel does not condemn us to a dark, boring, and unhappy life, but quite the opposite, for it promises and gives us true happiness. We need only review the Beatitudes and look at those who, after entering through the narrow gate, have been happy and have made others happy, obtaining—through their faith and hope in the One who does not disappoint—the reward of selflessness: “an overabundant return in this present age and eternal life in the age to come” (Lk 18:30). Mary’s “yes” is accompanied by humility, poverty, and the cross, but also by the reward for faithfulness and generous self-giving.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “When the priest offers Jesus on the altar and takes him somewhere, all people should bow their knees and surrender to the Lord, the living and true God, praise, glory and devotion.” (Saint Francis of Assisi)

- “The liturgy is ‘God's work’. We must dispose ourselves through a prayerful attitude, with discipline, peace (no rush!) and reverence: we are in the sight of God!” (Benedict XVI)

- “The way of Christ ‘leads to life’; a contrary way ‘leads to destruction’ (Mt 7:13). The Gospel parable of the two ways remains ever present in the catechesis of the Church; it shows the importance of moral decisions for our salvation (...)” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 1696)

Other comments

“Do not give what is holy to dogs”

Deacon Fr. Evaldo PINA FILHO
(Brasilia, Brazil)

Today, the Lord makes three recommendations: The first one, “Do not give what is holy to dogs, or throw your pearls before swine” (Mt 7:6), makes a contrast in which “assets” are associated with “pearls” and to what “is holy”; and “dogs and swine” to what is impure. Saint John Chrysostom teaches us that “our enemies are like us in nature but not in faith.” Although the earthly benefits are equally distributed to the worthy and unworthy, it is not so when it comes to “spiritual graces”, which are a privilege of those who are faithful to God. The right distribution of spiritual assets is related to the zeal for sacred things.

The second recommendation is the so called “rule of gold” (cf. Mt 7:12), which encompasses everything the Law and the Prophets recommended, like branches of a single tree: the love of one’s neighbor presupposes the love of God, from which it comes.

Doing unto our neighbor what we would have done to us implies transparency of actions towards the other, the acknowledgement of their similitude to God, of their dignity. Why do we want the Good for ourselves? Because we recognize it as a means of identity and union with the Creator. Since the Good is, for us, the only means to achieve life in its fullest, its absence is unconceivable in our relationship with our neighbors. There is no place for the good where falseness prevails and evil preponders.

The third and last one, the “narrow gate”... Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI asked us: “What does this "narrow door" mean? Why do many not succeed in entering through it? Is it a way reserved for only a chosen few? “ No! The message of Christ is that “everyone may enter life, but the door is "narrow" for all. We are not

privileged. The passage to eternal life is open to all, but it is "narrow" because it is demanding: it requires commitment, self-denial and the mortification of one's selfishness.”

Let us pray to the Lord, who won universal salvation with His own life and resurrection, to gather us all in the eternal life Banquet.