Wednesday of the Twelfth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 7:15-20): Jesus said to his disciples: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but underneath are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. So by their fruits you will know them.”

"By their fruits you will know them"

Fr. Antoni ORIOL i Tataret
(Vic, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, a new evangelic contrast opens up before our eyes, the one between the good tree and the rotten tree. The avowals of Jesus are so simple they look almost simplistic. But we can affirm that they are certainly not! They are not simplistic, as real life is not simplistic either.

This one teaches us good trees can deteriorate and end up by bearing bad fruits while, on the other hand, there may be rotten trees ending up by bearing good fruits. So what does “every good tree bears good fruit” (Mt 7:17) mean? It means that the good one is good as long as he does not stop doing good things. That he does good things and he does not get tired of it. He does good and he does not give up before the temptation to do evil. He does good and perseveres till heroism. He does good and if by any chance he yields to the weariness of acting like this, of falling before the temptation of doing evil, of getting scared before the non-negotiable demand, he sincerely and truly admits it, heartily repents and... restarts all over again.

Ah! And he also does it, amongst other reasons, because he is conscious that if the tree does not bear a good fruit, it will be cut down and thrown into the fire (the fear of God keeps the true vine of the vineyard!). And also because, by being aware through personal and social experience of the goodness of others through their good deeds, he knows that he can be recognized as a good person not only because of his good words but through his facts.

It is not enough to say: “Lord, Lord!” Faith is shown through our works! As St. James wrote: “Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works” (Jm 2:18).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “We need to be pure in heart to see Jesus in the person of the spiritually poorest. Therefore, the more disfigured the image of God is in that person, the greater will be our faith and devotion in seeking Jesus’ face.” (Saint Teresa of Calcuta)

- “We receive [from the Spirit] a new way of being, the life of Christ becomes our own: we are able to think like Him, to act like Him, to see the world and the things in it with the eyes of Jesus.” (Francis)

- “When he comes at the end of time to judge the living and the dead, the glorious Christ will reveal the secret disposition of hearts and will render to each man according to his works, and according to his acceptance or refusal of grace.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 682)