Thursday of the Twelfth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 7:21-29): Jesus said to his disciples: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?’ Then I will declare to them solemnly, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.’

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined.”

When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven”

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Today we are struck by Jesus's emphatic statement: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Mt 7:21). At the very least, this statement calls us to responsibility in our condition as Christians, while at the same time making us feel the urgency to bear good witness to the faith.

Building the house on rock is a clear image that invites us to value our commitment of faith, which cannot be limited to mere beautiful words, but must be founded on the authority of works, imbued with charity. One of these days in June, the Church commemorates the life of Saint Pelagius, martyr of chastity, on the threshold of youth. Saint Bernard, recalling Pelagius's life, tells us in his treatise on the customs and ministry of bishops: “Chastity, however beautiful it may be, has no value or merit without charity.

Purity without love is like a lamp without oil; but wisdom says: How beautiful is wisdom with love! With that love of which the Apostle speaks: the love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and sincere faith."

The clear word, with the power of charity, manifests the authority of Jesus, which aroused awe in his fellow citizens: "The crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Mt 7:28-29). Our prayer and contemplation today should be accompanied by a serious reflection: How do I speak and act in my life as a Christian? How do I put my faith into practice? How do I put the commandment of love into practice in my personal, family, and professional life, and so on? It is not words or empty prayers that matter, but the effort to live according to God's Plan. Our prayer should always express our desire to do good and a request for help, since we recognize our weakness.

—Lord, may our prayer always be accompanied by the power of charity.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Do not build towers without a foundation, for our Lord does not care so much for the importance of our works as for the love with which they are done." (Saint Teresa of Jesus).

- "Sacred history provides many examples of saints who built their lives on the word of God. Being built up in Jesus Christ means responding positively to God's call, trusting in him and putting his word into practice." (Benedict XVI)

- "Besides its precepts the New Law includes the evangelical counsels. 'The Church's holiness is fostered in a special way by the manifold counsels which the Lord proposes to his disciples in the Gospel." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 1986)