

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 the one who does the will of my heavenly Father. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not speak in your name? Did we not cast out devils and perform many miracles in your name?’. Then I will tell them openly: ‘I have never known you; away from me, you evil people!’.

»So, then, anyone who hears these words of mine and acts accordingly is like a wise man, who built his house on rock. The rain poured, the rivers flooded, and the wind blew and struck that house, but it did not collapse because it was built on rock. But anyone who hears these words of mine and does not act accordingly, is like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain poured, the rivers flooded, and the wind blew and struck that house; it collapsed, and what a terrible fall that was!».

When Jesus had finished this discourse, the crowds were struck by the way he taught, because he taught with authority unlike their teachers of the Law.

«Not everyone who says to me: ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven»

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Today, Jesus' categorical claim strikes us: «Not everyone who says to me: ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my heavenly Father» (Mt 7:21). If nothing else, these words demand, in our condition as

Christians, our responsibility while letting us feel the urge to bear witness to our faith.

Building the house on rock is a clear image that invites us to value our commitment to our faith, which cannot be limited to just a few nice words, but must be based on the authority of our achievements, impregnated with charity. In June, the Church remembers young St. Pelayo's life who, rather than giving up his faith, preferred to be executed by the moors in a most tortuous manner. St. Bernard, while recalling St. Pelayo's life, tells us in his treatise on customs and duties of bishops: «No matter how beautiful it may be, chastity is of no value and merit without charity. Purity without love is like an oil-candle with no oil; but wisdom claims: how beautiful wisdom is with love! With that love the Apostle explains to us: emanating from a pure heart, a straight conscience and a sincere faith».

With the strength of charity, Jesus expresses his authority with the clear word that dumbfounds people: «The crowds were struck by the way he taught, because he taught with authority unlike their teachers of the Law» (Mt 7:28-29). Today's contemplation and our prayer, must be followed by a serious consideration: how do I speak and behave like a Christian in my life?; how do I define my testimony?; how do I undertake the commandment of love in my life, whether personal, family, professional, etc.? Words and prayers without any commitment do not count, but only our desire to live in accordance with God's Project. Our prayer should always be an expression of our craving for doing good deeds along with a request for help, because we recognize our own failings.

Let our prayer, O Lord, to be always joined by the strength of charity.