

Saturday of the Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 10:24-33): Jesus said to his Apostles: “No disciple is above his teacher, no slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, for the slave that he become like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household!

“Therefore do not be afraid of them. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.”

“No disciple is above his teacher”

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Today, the Gospel invites us to ponder over the relationship student/teacher: “No disciple is above his teacher, no slave above his master” (Mt 10:24). Amongst us it is not impossible a student can excel over the teacher who taught him the basics of a given subject. We have instances in History like the painter Giotto who quickly

surpassed his teacher Cimabue, or Manzoni, excelling over abbot Pieri. But the key to supreme wisdom is to be found only in the hands of the Man-God, where all of us can share it, although with a possibility to absorb it at different levels: from the great theologian St. Thomas Aquinas down to the boy getting ready for his First Communion. We may adorn it with as many different styled ornaments as we wish, but they will never amount to anything of essence that may enrich the intrinsic value of the doctrine. And, on the other hand, there are chances we may fall into some kind of heresy.

We must be careful not to try any mixtures that may distort us without any substantial contribution to the Good News. St. Augustine says, “We must abstain from meals, but even more so should we be fasting in errors.” One time, someone lent me a book about the Guardian Angels where mention is made of some esoteric doctrines, such as the metempsychosis, and of an incomprehensible need of redemption allegedly affecting these pure spirits confirmed in goodness.

Today's Gospel opens our eyes to the unavoidable fact the student may, at times, be misunderstood, face obstacles or even be persecuted for declaring himself a follower of Christ. Jesus' life was a continuous service in defense of truth. If He was even named “Beelzebul”, it is not surprising that in quarrels, in cultural confrontations or in TV debates we are called retrogrades. Our faithfulness to Christ-Master is the maximum acknowledgement, which we can be proud of: “Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father” (Mt 10:32).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“Yes, O Lord, make your face to shine upon us for good in peace, that we may be shielded by your mighty hand... We praise you through the High Priest and Guardian of our souls, Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and majesty to you both now and from generation to generation and for evermore. Amen.” (Saint Clement of Rome)

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“Anyone who does not know God, even though he may entertain all kinds of hopes, is ultimately without hope.” (Benedict XVI)

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“The term ‘soul’ ... refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him, that by which he is most especially in God's image: ‘soul’ signifies the spiritual principle in man.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N° 363)