Saturday of the Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 12:14-21): The Pharisees went out and took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. When Jesus realized this, he withdrew from that place. Many people followed him, and he cured them all, but he warned them not to make him known. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through Isaiah the prophet: “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom I delight; I shall place my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not contend or cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory. And in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

”He cured them all”

Fr. Josep Mª MASSANA i Mola OFM
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, the Gospel presents a double message. On the one hand, Jesus calls us with a beautiful invitation to follow him: “Many people followed him, and he cured them all” (Mt 12:15). If we follow Him, we shall find the remedy for all the troubles of our journey, as we were reminded not long ago: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). On the other hand, we are shown the value of gentle love: “He will not contend or cry out” (Mt 12:19).

He knows we are burdened and weary because of the heaviness of our temperamental and physical weaknesses… and for this unexpected cross that has visited us with all its coarseness, with all our disagreements, disappointments, grief and sorrow. In fact, “the Pharisees went out and took counsel against Jesus” (Mt 12:14), and if we know the disciple is not above his teacher (cf. Mt 10:24), we should be conscious that we shall also have to suffer from incomprehension and persecution.

All in all, it is a heavy burden upon us —a bundle that strains us. And we feel as if Jesus would be saying: “Cast off your bundle at my feet, and I will take care of it; give me that heavy burden that crushes you, and I will carry it; unload your worries and turn them over to me…”

It is kind of funny: Jesus invites us to cast off our burden, while He is offering us another one: His yoke—with the promise, however, that it is a soft and light one. He wants to show us that we cannot go through life without carrying some kind of burden; we are to carry some kind of load. But let it not be our bundle full of materialism; let it be, instead, His burden that does not weigh us down.

In Africa, mothers and elder sisters carry their offspring on their back. A missionary, once, saw a girl carrying her little brother... And he asked her: “Are you sure he is not too heavy for you?” And she answered back without thinking twice: “He is not heavy, he is my little brother, and I love him.” Love, Jesus’ yoke, is not only light, but it also sets us free from all that overwhelms us.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Men are hopeless creatures, and the less they concentrate on their own sins, the more interested they become in the sins of others. Unable to excuse themselves, they are ready to accuse others.” (Saint Augustine)

- “Jesus, true God and true man, ‘stripped’ himself, emptied himself, assumed the likeness of men in all things save sin, so as to behave as a servant totally dedicated to serving others.” (Benedict XVI)

- “The Messiah's characteristics are revealed above all in the ‘Servant songs’ (Cf. Isa 42:1-9) These songs proclaim the meaning of Jesus' Passion and show how he will pour out the Holy Spirit to give life to the many: not as an outsider, but by embracing our ‘form as slave’ (Phil 2:7). Taking our death upon himself, he can communicate to us his own Spirit of life.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 713)