Thursday of the Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 13:10-17): The disciples approached Jesus and said, "Why do you speak to the crowd in parables?" He said to them in reply, "Because knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted. To anyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand. Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says:

You shall indeed hear but not understand,
you shall indeed look but never see.
Gross is the heart of this people,
they will hardly hear with their ears,
they have closed their eyes,
lest they see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their hearts
and be converted and I heal them.

"But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."

"Blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear"

Fr. Manel MALLOL Pratginestós
(Terrassa, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we remember the "encomium" Jesus Christ addressed to those around Him in those days: "Blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear" (Mt 13:16). And we ask ourselves: are these words meant only for those who saw and heard Him directly, or could they also be intended for us? It seems that those who were privileged to share their lives with Jesus—to be physically present with Him—were the truly blessed ones. Whereas we should rather belong in the group of the righteous people and prophets—without being either righteous or prophetic—who would have liked to see and hear.

But we should not forget the Lord is referring to righteous people and prophets before his arrival, before His Revelation: "Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it" (Mt 13:17). The fullness of time is brought with Him, and we find ourselves in this fullness;

we are already in Christ's time, in Salvation's time. Certainly, we have not seen Jesus with our own eyes, but we have, indeed, known Him. We do know Him. We have not heard His voice with our own ears, but we have definitely heard His words. We do hear them. The knowledge our faith gives us, even though not perceptible, is a true knowledge, which brings us near the truth making us, therefore, feel happy and jubilant.

Let us be grateful for our Christian faith, and let us rejoice. Let us try to make our relationship with Jesus not a distant one, but as close as possible. Like that of the disciples who were by his side, who saw and heard Him. Let us not look at Jesus from today toward yesterday, but from today into today; let us actually share His time, a never-ending time. Prayer —to speak with the Lord— and the Eucharist —to receive Him— assures us this nearness to Him, and makes us really happy while looking at Him with the eyes and ears of our faith. “Receive, therefore, God's image, that you lost because of your bad deeds” (St. Augustine).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “‘For whoever has, to him shall be given’. As much as to say, whoever has the desire and the zeal, to him shall be given all those things which are of God; but whoever lack these, and does not contribute that part that pertains to him, to him neither are the things which are of God given.” (Saint John Chrysostom)

- “‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’ Precisely to encourage their decision, conversion of the heart; indeed, by their very nature parables demand the effort of interpretation, they not only challenge the mind but also freedom.” (Benedict XVI)

- “The kingdom of heaven was inaugurated on earth by Christ. ‘This kingdom shone out before men in the word, in the works and in the presence of Christ’ (Vatican II)’. The Church is the seed and beginning of this kingdom (...)” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 567)