Saturday of the First Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 2:13-17): Jesus went out along the sea. All the crowd came to him and he taught them. As he passed by, he saw Levi, son of Alphaeus, sitting at the customs post. Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed Jesus. While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners sat with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him. Some scribes who were Pharisees saw that Jesus was eating with sinners and tax collectors and said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus heard this and said to them, “Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.”

“I did not come to call the righteous but sinners”

Fr. Joaquim MONRÓS i Guitart
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Today, Saint Mark tells us how Jesus taught and how the crowd came to Him. In those days, they were as hungry for doctrine as we are today, ignorance being always our worst enemy. Let us not forget the expression: “They will hate no more when they ignore no more”...

As He walked along, Jesus sees Levi, son of Alphaeus, sitting in his office and, says to him: “Follow me” (Mk 2:14), and Levi leaves everything and follows Him. With his promptitude and generosity Levi scored his biggest “business”. Not only the “business of the century”, but the business of Eternity, too.

It would be worth our mulling over Roman tax collectors, who ceased to exist a long while ago, while Levi —better known today as Matthew— keeps piling up profits with his writings, as one of the twelve pillars of the Church. This is what happens when we promptly follow our Lord. He said: “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life” (Mat 19:29).

Jesus accepted the banquet Matthew offered Him and His apostles at home, together with other tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees —who always seemed to prefer witnessing how others worked— felt like informing His disciples that their Master was eating with people they considered as sinners. The Lord hears them and, in self-defense, He answers: “I did not come to call the righteous but sinners” (Mk 2:17). Mankind is in hard need of that divine Healer. We are all sinners and, as Saint Paul says, “all have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23).

Let us always answer as quickly as Mary used to when responding to Her vocation as co-redeemer.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Woe is me! Lord, have pity on me. Woe is me! Lo, I hide not my wounds; You are the Physician, I the sick; Thou merciful, I miserable.” (Saint Augustine)

- “Those who seem to be the farthest from holiness can even become a model of the acceptance of God's mercy and offer a glimpse of its marvelous effects.” (Benedicto XVI)

- “Christ invited people to faith and conversion, but never coerced them (...).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, №160)