Monday of the Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 13:31-35): Jesus proposed a parable to the crowds. "The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches."

He spoke to them another parable. "The Kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened."

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world.

"He spoke to them only in parables"

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Today, the Gospel shows us Jesus preaching to his disciples. He does so, as is His custom, in the form of parables, using simple everyday images to explain the great hidden mysteries of His Kingdom. In this way he could be understood by everyone from the most highly educated to the simplest of individuals.

“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed” (Mt 13:31) The mustard seed is so tiny it is almost invisible, but if we take good care of it and water it properly... it ends up becoming a large tree. “The Kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour...” (Mt 13:33). The yeast is invisible, but if it weren't present the dough would not rise. Such is the way for life lived as a Christian, the life of grace: you don't see it externally; it doesn't make a sound, but... if one lets it introduce itself in one's heart, divine grace nourishes the seed and converts people from sinners to saints.

We get this divine grace through faith, through prayer, through the sacraments, through love. But this life of grace is, above all, a gift that we must wait and hope for, that we must desire with humility. A gift which the wise and learned of this world do not know how to appreciate, but that Our Lord God wants to transmit to the humble and uncomplicated.

It would be great if, when He looks for us, he finds us, not in the group of the proud, but amongst the humble, the ones who recognize themselves as weak sinners, but very grateful for, and trusting in, the goodness of the Lord. This way the mustard seed will grow into the large tree, the yeast of the Word of God will bring about for us the fruit of eternal life because “the more the heart is lowered in humility, the higher it is raised to perfection” (Saint Augustine).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Don’t be afraid of the paganized world: our Lord has in fact chosen us to be leaven, salt and light in this world. Don’t be worried. The world won’t harm you unless you want it to.” (Saint Josemaría)

- “The family which experiences the joy of faith communicates it naturally. That family is the salt of the earth and the light of the world, it is the leaven of society as a whole.” (Francis)

- “The characteristic of the lay state being a life led in the midst of the world and of secular affairs, lay people are called by God to make of their apostolate, through the vigor of their Christian spirit, a leaven in the world." (Catechism Of the Catholic Church, Nº 940)