Thursday of the Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 13:47-53): Jesus said to the disciples: “The Kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind. When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away. Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.”

“Do you understand all these things?” They answered, “Yes.” And he replied, “Then every scribe who has been instructed in the Kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old.” When Jesus finished these parables, he went away from there.

“They haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away”

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Today, the Gospel is a vital call to conversion. Jesus does not spare us the hard reality: “The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace” (Mt 13:49-50). The warning is quite clear. We just cannot take it easy and go to sleep!

Now, it is our turn to freely choose: we either seek God and make goodness a part of our life, or we prefer to stand on the precipice of death. We are either with Christ or against him. To convert ourselves means, in this case, to freely opt to become one of the upright ones and live a life worthy of God’s children.

However, within us we have the experience of sin: we realize the good we should do but we do the evil, instead; what do we do to provide our lives with a sense of true unity? We, alone, cannot do much. Only if we place ourselves in God's hands shall we be able to attain the goodness and be counted amongst the upright ones.

“Because we know not when our Judge shall appear, so we should live every day as if it were our last” (St. Jerome). These words are a call to live with intensity and responsibility our Christianity. It is not a matter of being afraid, but of living in the hope this is a time of grace, praise and glory.

Christ shows us the only way to our own glorification. Christ is the only way to heaven; therefore, our

salvation, our happiness and whatever we can imagine happens through Him. And if we have everything in Christ, we can hardly refrain from loving the Church, that shows him to us and is His Mystical Body. Against purely human visions of this reality we have to recover the divine-spiritual vision: nothing bigger than Christ and the fulfillment of his will!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “My words are spirit, and they are life, and are not to be weighed by man's understanding. They are not to be drawn forth for vain approbation, but to be heard in silence, and to be received with all humility and with deep love." (Thomas à Kempis)

- “Wherever we go, even to the smallest parish in the most remote corner of this earth, there is the one Church. And this is a great gift of God! The Church is one for us all.” (Francis)

- “To fulfill the Father's will, Christ ushered in the Kingdom of heaven on earth. the Church “is the Reign of Christ already present in mystery.” (Second Vatican Council)" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 763)