Friday of the Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 6:39-42): Jesus told his disciples a parable: “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,’ when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother’s eye.”

“No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher”

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Today, the words of the Gospel make us reflect on the importance of example and of seeking an exemplary life for others. Indeed, the popular saying goes that "actions speak louder than words,” or another that states that "a picture is worth a thousand words." Let us not forget that, in Christianity, we are all guides —without exception! —, since Baptism confers upon us a share in the priesthood (saving mediation) of Christ: indeed, all the baptized have received the baptismal priesthood. And every priesthood, in addition to the missions of sanctifying and teaching others, also incorporates the munus—the function—of governing or leading.

Yes, all of us—whether we like it or not—with our conduct have the opportunity to become an inspiring model for those around us. Let us think, for example, of the influence that parents have over their children, teachers over their students, authorities over citizens, etc. Christians, however, must have a particularly keen awareness of all this. But... "Can a blind person guide a blind person?" (Luke 6:39).

For us Christians, what the Jews and the first generations of Christians said of Jesus Christ is like a wake-up call: "He has done all things well" (Mark 7:37); "...all that Jesus did and taught" (Acts 1:1).

We must strive to translate into action what we believe and profess in words. On one occasion, Pope Benedict XVI, while he was still Cardinal Ratzinger, stated that "the most threatening danger is adapted Christianities," that is, those people who profess to be Catholic in words but, in practice, in their behavior, do not manifest the “radicalism” characteristic of the Gospel.

Being radical does not mean being fanatical (since charity is patient and tolerant) or exaggerated (since it is impossible to exaggerate when it comes to love). As Saint John Paul II stated, "the image of her crucified Lord, (is) the supreme witness of patient love and humble meekness": it is neither fanatical nor exaggerated. But it is radical, so much so that He makes us say with the centurion who witnessed his death: "This man was innocent beyond doubt" (Luke 23:47).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Try to acquire the virtues you believe lacking in your brothers. Then you will no longer see their defects, for you will no longer have them yourself.” (Saint Augustine)

- “Prayer and the sacraments obtain for us that light of truth thanks to which we are able to be at once tender and strong, gentle and firm, silent and communicative at the right time, admonishing and correcting in the right way.” (Benedict XVI)

- “By charity, we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves for love of God. Charity, the form of all the virtues, ‘binds everything together in perfect harmony’ (Col 3:14).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 1844)