Wednesday of the Twenty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 7:31-35): Jesus said to the crowds: "To what shall I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children who sit in the marketplace and call to one another, 'We played the flute for you, but you did not dance. We sang a dirge, but you did not weep.' For John the Baptist came neither eating food nor drinking wine, and you said, 'He is possessed by a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking and you said, 'Look, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

"To what shall I compare the people of this generation?"

Fr. Xavier SERRA i Permanyer
(Sabadell, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Jesus confirms the hardness of heart of the people of his time, at least, as far as the Pharisees are concerned, so self-assured that nobody can convert them. They do not alter their mind not even before John the Baptist, who "came neither eating food nor drinking wine" (Lk 7:33), and accuse him of having an evil spirit; they do not change either before the Son of Man, "eating and drinking", and they say "look, he is a glutton and a drunkard", and "a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Lk 7:34). Their pride and arrogance are hiding behind these accusations: nobody is to teach them anything; they do not accept God, but they custom-make their own God, a God that would not move them from their convenience, privileges and involvement.

We are also running this risk. How often do we criticize everything: whether the Church says so, or because she has said that, or even when she says just the contrary...; and we could just as well find all sort of faults when referring to God or to others. In actual fact, however, and perhaps unconsciously, we want to justify our laziness and lack of ambition for a true conversion, to excuse our own convenience and lack of flexibility. St. Bernard says: "What is more logic than acknowledging

our own wounds and scars, especially when one shields them so they are not seen? From this we may infer that, ultimately, even if somebody else discovers them, we might stubbornly defend that they are not wounds, and leave our heart abandoned to deceiving words."

We must let the Word of God to reach our heart and convert us, transforming us with its strength. But first, we must request the gift of humility. Only the humble souls are able to receive the grace of God and, therefore, let Him come close to us, since as "publicans" and "sinners" that we are we need him to heal us. ¡Woe to those who claim that they do not need a doctor! The worst for any diseased is to believe he is healthy, because then the sickness will progress and he will never recover his health. We are all sick to death, and only Christ can save us, whether we realize it or not. Let us thank our Savior, and let us welcome him as such!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Not all can perceive wisdom in all its perfection. Nevertheless, all are filled with the spirit of wisdom according to their capacity, provided that they have faith. If you believe, you possess the spirit of wisdom." (Saint Ambrose)

- "It will do us good to ask ourselves: How do I want to be saved? My way? Or in a divine manner, that is, on the path of Jesus? (Francis).

- "… Faith and the practice of the Gospel provide each person with an experience of life 'in Christ,' who enlightens him and makes him able to evaluate the divine and human realities according to the Spirit of God. Thus the Holy Spirit can use the humblest to enlighten the learned and those in the highest positions." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 2038)