

Saturday of the Twenty-fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 9:43b-45): While they were all amazed at his every deed, Jesus said to his disciples, “Pay attention to what I am telling you. The Son of Man is to be handed over to men.” But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was hidden from them so that they should not understand it, and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

“The Son of Man is to be handed over to men.”

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Today, that the Creator of all Life announces His own delivery into the hands of those whom He has come to save in exchange for His own life, is quite a provocation. It can be said that it was not necessary, that it was an exaggeration. But we keep forgetting the heavy load overwhelming Christ's heart, our sin, the most radical evil, cause and effect of our placing ourselves in the place of God. Even more so, of our not letting God love us, while insisting on remaining within the limits of our own shortcomings and most immediate present life. It is as necessary for us to assume we are sinners as it is for us to recognize that God loves us in the person of His Son Jesus Christ. For, after all, we are like His disciples, “But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was hidden from them so that they should not understand it, and they were afraid to ask him about this saying” (Lk 9:45).

To put it in images: in Heaven we shall find all sins and all vices, except arrogance, as those who are arrogant never admit their own sins and do not let God forgive them, a God that loves us so much to the point of dying for us. And, in Hell, we shall be able to find all virtues, except humility, as the humble one knows himself quite well and fully realizes that without God's grace, he cannot stop offending Him nor can he reciprocate God's Goodness.

One of the keys of Christian wisdom is the acknowledgment of the greatness and immensity of God's Love, while we also acknowledge our smallness and the vileness of our sin. How slow we can be to grasp it! When the day will come we shall discover we have at our disposal God's Love, and we shall say along with St. Augustine, with tears of Love: “It took me so long to love you, O God!” And that day can be today. It can be today. It certainly can.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Do not be afraid. This cross inflicts a mortal injury, not on me, but on death. These nails no longer pain me, but only deepen your love for me." (St. Peter Chrysologus)
- "This faithfulness of his means that he acts not only as God toward men, but also as man toward God, in this way establishing the Covenant irrevocably." (Benedict XVI)
- "From the beginning of his public life, at his baptism, Jesus is the "Servant", wholly consecrated to the redemptive work that he will accomplish by the "baptism" of his Passion." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n° 565)