

Friday of the Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 10:13-16): Jesus said to them, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And as for you, Capernaum, 'Will you be exalted to heaven? You will go down to the netherworld.' Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

"Whoever listens to you listens to me"

Fr. Jordi SOTORRA i Garriga
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Today, we contemplate Jesus addressing His speech to some towns of Galilee where He had preached and carried out the works by His Father and that had been the cause of His preoccupation. Nowhere had He preached and made miracles as He did in Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. The sowing had been plentiful, but the harvest had been meager. Not even Jesus could persuade them...! What a mystery human freedom is! We can say "no" to God... The evangelic message is not imposed upon us by force: it is offered to me but I can refuse it; I can accept it or reject it. Our Lord's respect for my freedom is total. What a responsibility for me!

Jesus' language: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!" (Lk 10:13) when his apostolic mission was over, is more indicative of suffering than of condemnation. The nearness of the Kingdom of God was not a call for penance and conversion for those towns. Jesus recognizes that Tyre and Sidon would have taken more advantage of all the graces granted to the Galileans.

But Jesus' frustration is even greater when He refers to Capernaum. "'Will you be exalted to heaven? You will go down to the netherworld.'" (Lk 10:15). It was in

Capernaum where Peter had his home and Jesus had centered His preaching. Once again, we can detect in these words a feeling of sadness rather than a threat. We could, just as well, say the same thing about many cities and persons of our time. They believe they are being lifted, but in fact, they are being thrown down.

“Whoever listens to you listens to me” (Lk 10:16). These words ending today's Gospel are a call to conversion and are bearers of hope. If we listen to Jesus' voice, we still have time. Conversion happens when love banishes selfishness from our life, which is a permanent unfinished task. St. Maximus will tell us: “Nothing is more pleasant and loved by God, than men convert to him with sincere contrition.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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"It is true that our faith is not palpable and that it does not depend on the senses. It is a gift from God that He instills in the humble soul, because faith does not dwell in those who are full of pride" (St. Francis de Sales)

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"Only the Word of God, the Word of Jesus, saves us" (Francis)

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"Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions..." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1431)