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 see Jesus turn His gaze toward those cities of Galilee that had been the object of His concern and where He had preached and performed the works of the Father. Nowhere else had he preached and performed miracles as he had in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. The sowing had been abundant, but the harvest was not good. Not even Jesus could convince them...! What a mystery, that of human freedom! We can say "no" to God... The Gospel message is not imposed by force; it is simply offered, and I can close myself off to it; I can accept it or reject it. The Lord fully respects my freedom. What a responsibility for me!

Jesus' words: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!" (Luke 10:13) at the end of His apostolic mission express more suffering than condemnation. The proximity of the Kingdom of God was not a call to repentance and change for those cities. Jesus recognizes that in Sidon and Tyre they would have made better use of all the grace bestowed on the Galileans.

Jesus' disappointment is greater when it comes to Capernaum. “Will you be exalted to heaven? You will go down to the netherworld” (Luke 10:15). Peter had his house here and Jesus had made this city the center of his preaching. Once again, we see more sadness than threat in these words. We could say the same about many cities and people of our time. They think they are prospering when in reality they are sinking.

"Whoever listens to you listens to me" (Luke 10:16). These words, with which the Gospel concludes, are a call to conversion and bring hope. If we listen to the voice of Jesus, we still have time. Conversion consists of love progressively overcoming selfishness in our lives, which is always an unfinished work. Saint Maximus tells us: "There is nothing so pleasing and beloved by God as the fact that men convert to Him with sincere repentance."

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "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)

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

- "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)