Wednesday of the Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 11:42-46): The Lord said: “Woe to you Pharisees! You pay tithes of mint and of rue and of every garden herb, but you pay no attention to judgment and to love for God. These you should have done, without overlooking the others. Woe to you Pharisees! You love the seat of honor in synagogues and greetings in marketplaces. Woe to you! You are like unseen graves over which people unknowingly walk.”

Then one of the scholars of the law said to him in reply, “Teacher, by saying this you are insulting us too.” And he said, “Woe also to you scholars of the law! You impose on people burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not lift one finger to touch them.”

“These you should have done, without overlooking the others”

Fr. Joaquim FONT i Gassol
(Igualada, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we can see how the Divine Master gives us a few lessons: amongst them, He speaks of the tithe and also of the coherence educators (parents, teachers and all Christian believers) must have. In today's Mass, the teachings of St. Luke's Gospel appear in a somewhat synthesized form, but Matthew's parallel passages (23:1…) are more comprehensive and concrete. Our Lord's entire line of thought infers that at the heart and soul of our activity there must be justice, charity, mercy and faith (cf. Lk 11:42).

The Old Testament tithing and our present collaboration with the Church, according to laws and norms, follow the same principle. Notwithstanding, to apply the principle of a mandatory law to small things —as the Masters of the Law used to do— is exaggerated and wearing: “Woe also to you scholars of the law! You impose on people burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not lift one finger to touch them” (Lk 11:46).

It is true that sensible people can show true instances of unselfishness. We have recent personal experiences of people who, out of their harvest, have given to the Church —for worship and the poor— the 10% (tithe); of others, who reserve their first flower (their choicest fruits), or the best fruits of their orchard; or, of others, who come to offer the same amount they have spent on their holiday vacation; and, of others, who just bring the pick of their work for the same purpose. One can guess all of them have

assimilated the influence of the Holy Spirit. Love is imaginative; from small things it manages to take out joy and merits before God.

The good shepherd goes before the flock. Good parents are models to follow: example attracts. Good educators make a point of living by the virtues they teach. This is being coherent. Not only to a point, but fully: living a life close to the tabernacle, the devotion to the Mother of God, some small services at home, spreading good Christian humor... “Great souls pay much attention to little things” (Saint Josemaria Escrivá).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Do everything for Love. So there will be no small things: everything will be great. Perseverance in small things for Love is heroism". (Saint Josemaria)

- «Many can know science, even theology. But if they do not do this theology on their knees, that is, humbly, like the little ones, they will not understand anything” (Francis)

- "Jesus... often argued within the framework of rabbinical interpretation of the Law. Yet Jesus could not help but offend the teachers of the Law, for he was not content to propose his interpretation alongside theirs but taught the people "as one who had authority, and not as their scribes"." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 581)