

Thursday of the Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 11:47-54): The Lord said: “Woe to you who build the memorials of the prophets whom your fathers killed.

Consequently, you bear witness and give consent to the deeds of your ancestors, for they killed them and you do the building.

Therefore, the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send to them prophets and Apostles; some of them they will kill and persecute’ in order that this generation might be charged with the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who died between the altar and the temple building. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be charged with their blood! Woe to you, scholars of the law! You have taken away the key of knowledge. You yourselves did not enter and you stopped those trying to enter.”

When Jesus left, the scribes and Pharisees began to act with hostility toward him and to interrogate him about many things, for they were plotting to catch him at something he might say.

“Woe to you who build the memorials of the prophets whom your fathers killed”

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Today, we may mull over the meaning, acceptance and treatment given to the prophets: “I will send to them prophets and Apostles; some of them they will kill and persecute” (Lk 11:49). They were persons of any social or religious condition that received the divine message and were imbued by it; driven by the Holy Spirit, they communicated it with signs and words intelligible in their own time. It was a message conveyed by means of discourses, not very laudable, generally, or by feats,

almost always, difficult to accept. A characteristic of the prophecy is its discomfort. The gift is rather inconvenient for the recipient, as, deep inside, it hurts, while being quite embarrassing for the environment, that today, thanks to the Net or the satellites, can be divulged all over the world.

Prophet's contemporaries pretend to condemn him to silence, and they slander him, discredit him, and so on until he dies. It is when that moment finally arrives that it is time to build a memorial and pay homage to him, as he will not be a nuisance anymore for anyone. At present, we also have some prophets who enjoy universal reputation. Saint Teresa of Calcutta, Saint John XXIII, Monsignor Romero... Do we remember what they postulated and expected from us? do we carry out what they showed us? Our generation will have to render accounts for the ozone layer we have managed to deplete, for wasting water resources, but also for forgetting that which our prophets have told us.

There still are persons pretending “the right to exclusive knowledge”, that—in the best of cases—are willing to share with their kinship only, who allow them to be well set up in their success and fame. Persons who do not let in those who try to enter the field of cognition, lest they get to know as much as themselves and move on ahead of them: “Woe to you, scholars of the law! You have taken away the key of knowledge. You yourselves did not enter and you stopped those trying to enter” (Lk 11:52).

Now, as in Jesus' times, there are many who analyze phrases and study texts to discredit whoever may inconvenience them with their words: do we also do the same? “There is nothing more dangerous than to judge the things of God with human discourses” (St. John Chrysostom).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“For those who are called sons, and are not sons, what profiteth them the name where the thing is not? So, many are called Christians, and yet in deeds are not found such; because they are not this which they are called, that is, in life, in manners, in faith, in hope, in charity.” (Saint Augustine)

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“Moral posturing is part and parcel of temptation. It does not invite us directly to do evil, which would be far too blatant. It pretends to show us a better way.” (Benedict XVI)

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“In all of his life Jesus presents himself as our model. He is ‘the perfect man’, who invites us to become his disciples and follow him. In humbling himself, he has given us an example to imitate, through his prayer he draws us to pray, and by his poverty he calls us to accept freely the privation and persecutions that may come our way.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 520)