Friday of the Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 12:1-7): At that time: So many people were crowding together that they were trampling one another underfoot. Jesus began to speak, first to his disciples, “Beware of the leaven—that is, the hypocrisy—of the Pharisees.

“There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed on the housetops. I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body but after that can do no more. I shall show you whom to fear. Be afraid of the one who after killing has the power to cast into Gehenna; yes, I tell you, be afraid of that one. Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them has escaped the notice of God. Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.”

“Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows”

Fr. Salomon BADATANA Mccj
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Today, we contemplate in the Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ who turns to the crowds after confronting the Jewish religious authorities who are the Pharisees and the scribes. The Gospel tells us that the crowd was so big that they crushed one another. It is clear here that they were hungry to hear the words of Jesus who spoke with an extraordinary authority to their religious leaders.

But St. Luke informs us that before anything else, Jesus began speaking to His own disciples saying: “Beware of the leaven–that is, the hypocrisy–of the Pharisees” (Lk 12:1). Our Lord Jesus Christ wants to lead us to practice sincerity and transparency rather than hypocrisy as the Pharisees and the scribes do. For they show an external attitude which does not conform to their interior way of life: they pretend to be who they are not.

It is against this that our Lord Jesus Christ warns us in today’s Gospel when He says: “There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known” (Lk 12:2). Yes, everything will be revealed. This is why we ought to try to accord our life with what we profess and proclaim. This is obviously not easy. But we don’t have to be afraid for our God is in control. As St. John Paul II said “God’s love doesn’t impose burdens upon us that we cannot carry… For whatever He asks of us, He provides the

help that is needed.” Nothing happens that He is not aware of. Even our hairs have been numbered. Yes we have a price before God. Let’s not be afraid because His love for us is endless.

Lord, grant us the wisdom to well match our life to the exigencies of our faith, even amidst the tumults of this world. Amen.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Do not fear any external enemy, conquer yourself; then, you will triumph over the whole world.” (Saint Augustine)

- “Coherence between faith and testimony in our daily life. This is a Christian!, not so much in what he says, but in what he does, and the way in which he behaves. This coherence, which gives us life, is a grace of the Holy Spirit which we must ask for.” (Francis)

- "The hierarchy of creatures is expressed by the order of the "six days", from the less perfect to the more perfect. God loves all his creatures and takes care of each one, even the sparrow..." (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 342)

Other comments

“Beware of the leaven–that is, the hypocrisy–of the Pharisees”

Fr. Raimondo M. SORGIA Mannai OP
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Today, the Lord invites us to mull over a sort of bad yeast which bread cannot ferment with, but only causes it to apparently rise while, in fact, leaves it uncooked and unfit to be eaten: “Beware of the leaven–that is, the hypocrisy–of the Pharisees” (Lk 12:1). It is hypocrisy and it is only an appearance of goodness, a mask made with cloth of many striking colors, which hide vices and moral deformities, dastardly infections of the spirit and microbes that tarnish the mind and, consequently, our very existence.

This is why Jesus warns us that we must be cautious in front of these wrongdoers that, by preaching with their bad examples and with the glitter of their lying words, they try to scatter infection around them. I remember a journalist —a bright professor of philosophy— who wanted to oppose the Catholic Church position on the so called “matrimony” among homosexuals. And with a joyful gait and a rosary of sophisms as big as an elephant, he tried to thwart the sound reasons that the Magisterium had

expounded in one of its recent documents. Here we have what we could classify as a Pharisee of our time that, after considering himself as baptized and a believer, he moves away with ease from the thinking of the Church and from the spirit of Christ and, on top of everything, he tries to pose as teacher, companion and guide of the faithful.

Let us now deal with another subject: the Master recommends us to distinguish between two kinds of fear: “do not be afraid of those who kill the body but after that can do no more” (Lk 12:4), that would be the harassers of the Christian ideals, who can kill scores of the faithful in times of “man hunt” or, occasionally, some singular testimonies of Jesus Christ.

But a completely differently motivated fear is the fear of losing, not only our body, but also our soul, and this remains in the hands of our Divine Judge; not that the soul dies (it would be a great luck for the sinner), but that it tastes a bitterness that could be named “mortal” because it is absolute and endless. “If you choose to live a good life here, you won't be dispatched to eternal punishment. But because you can't choose here not to die, choose, while you are alive, not to die for ever” (St. Augustine).