Saturday of the Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 12:8-12): Jesus said to his disciples: “I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others the Son of Man will acknowledge before the angels of God. But whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God.

“Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. When they take you before synagogues and before rulers and authorities, do not worry about how or what your defense will be or about what you are to say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you should say.”

“Everyone who acknowledges me before others the Son of Man will acknowledge”

Fr. Alexis MANIRAGABA
(Ruhengeri, Rwanda)

Today, the Lord arouses our faith and hope in Him. Jesus foresees that we will have to appear before the Heavenly Host to be examined. And whoever has spoken out in favor of Jesus by adhering to His mission “the Son of Man will acknowledge before the angels of God.” (Lk 12:8). Such public confession is made in words, in deeds and throughout our lives.

This interpellation of the confession is even more necessary and urgent in our times, when there still are people who do not want to hear the voice of God nor follow His way. However, the confession of our faith will be strongly followed. Therefore, let us not be confessors for fear of punishment –that will be harsher for apostates– nor for the copious rewards reserved for the faithful. Our testimony is necessary and urgent for life in this world, and God himself demands it from us, as St. John Chrysostom said: “God is not satisfied with our inward faith; He asks for an outward and public confession, to boost us to a greater confidence and love.”

Our confession is sustained by the power and assurance of the Spirit who is active in us and protects us. The acknowledgement of Jesus Christ before His angels is vital since this fact will allow us to see Him face to face, live with Him and be flooded by His light. At the same time, the opposite will be nothing less than suffering and losing our life, to be deprived of His light and dispossessed of all our possessions. Let us, therefore, plead for the grace to avoid any denials be they out of fear of torture or ignorance; out of heresies, out of sterile faith or lack of responsibility; or simply because we would like to avoid martyrdom. Let us be strong; the Holy Spirit is with us! And "With the Holy Spirit, Mary is always present…

and she has made possible the missionary outburst which took place at Pentecost” (Pope Francis).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "This impenitence then is the blasphemy of the Spirit, which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. This impenitence, in one word, has no forgiveness neither in this world, nor in the world to come." (Saint Augustinus)

- “The Church needs everyday saints, those of ordinary life. They are the witnesses who lead the Church forward; and affirm it with coherence of life and with the strength of the Holy Spirit which they have been given.” (Francis)

- " (...) There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 1864)

Other comments

“For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you should say.”

Fr. Albert TAULÉ i Viñas
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Jesus' words inviting us to acknowledge Him before men, reverberate once more: “I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others the Son of Man will acknowledge before the angels of God” (Lk 12:8). We live in a time when public life vindicates the lay status, forcing believers to express their faith only within the range of their private confines. When a Christian, a priest, a bishop, the Pope... have something to say publicly, even though it may be full of common sense, it is widely criticized, simply because it comes from that particular person, irrespective of the fact that we —as everybody else!— are also entitled to say what we think. But, no matter how much of an inconvenience it may be for some, we cannot help announcing the Gospel. In any case, “the Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you should say” (Lk 12:12). In this respect, St Cyril of Jerusalem emphasized it while affirming “the Holy Spirit, who dwells in those well predisposed, teaches us, as a doctor, what we have to tell.”

The attacks we suffer, may have a different materiality, because it is not the same to reprove a member of the Church (at times, quite rightly because of our many shortcomings), as to attack Jesus Christ (when observed only in his human dimension), or to slander the Holy Spirit, whether by blasphemy or by disavowal of the existence and attributes of God.

With respect to forgiving the offense, even if the sin is light, it is necessary to have a previous inner attitude of contrition. If there is no ruefulness, there cannot be any exculpation, for the bridge is broken at one end. This is why Jesus says there are sins that not even God will forgive, unless there exists the humble attitude on the sinner's side to admit his sin (cf. Lk 12:10).