

Friday of the Twenty-ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 12:54-59): Jesus said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west you say immediately that it is going to rain—and so it does; and when you notice that the wind is blowing from the south you say that it is going to be hot—and so it is. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky; why do you not know how to interpret the present time? “Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? If you are to go with your opponent before a magistrate, make an effort to settle the matter on the way; otherwise your opponent will turn you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the constable, and the constable throw you into prison. I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.”

“Why do you not know how to interpret the present time? Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?”

Fr. Frederic RÀFOLS i Vidal
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Jesus is asking us to look up and watch the skies. This morning, after three days of continuous rain, the sky has appeared clear and radiant, in one of the most splendid days of this Fall. By and by, now that the weathermen are like family members, we become more conversant with weather changes. But, on the other hand, we find many more difficulties in understanding the changing times in which we live: “You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky; why do you not know how to interpret the present time?” (Lk 12:56). Amongst those listening to Jesus, many let go of a unique chance in the history of Mankind. They could not identify the Son of God in Jesus. They didn't know the time, the hour of salvation.

The II Vatican Council, in the Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (n. 4), updates today's

Gospel: “The Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel (...). We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics.”

When we are making history, it is not too difficult to point out the occasions lost by the Church for not having discovered the time in which we were living. But, Lord: what occasions are we perhaps wasting now by not being able to read the signs of the times, or what is tantamount, for not being able to live and throw light upon today's problems with the light shed by the Gospel? Today, Jesus reminds us once more: “Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?” (Lk 12:57).

We are not living in a world of wickedness, though there may be plenty of it. But God has not forsaken His world. As St. John of the Cross reminds us, we live in a world in which the very God trod on and made beautiful. Saint Teresa of Calcutta saw the signs of the times, and the times have understood Saint Teresa of Calcutta. Let her invigorate us. Let us keep on looking upwards without losing sight of our earth.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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"Intense prayer, yes, but it does not distract us from our commitment to history: by opening our heart to the love of God it also opens it to the love of our brothers and sisters, and makes us capable of shaping history according to God's plan" (Saint John Paul II)

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"We have to walk firm in Christ' faith, firm in the truth of the Gospel; but our attitude has to move continuously according to the signs of the times" (Francis)

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"... Every human person, created in the image of God, has the natural right to be recognized as a free and responsible being. All owe to each other this duty of respect. the right to the exercise of freedom, especially in moral and religious matters..." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n 1738)