

Friday 31st in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 16,1-8): At another time Jesus told his disciples, «There was a rich man whose steward was reported to him for fraudulent service. He summoned the steward and asked him: ‘What is this I hear about you? I want you to render an account of your service for it is about to be terminated’. The steward thought to himself: ‘What am I to do now? My master will surely dismiss me. I am not strong enough to do hard work, and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I will do: I must make sure that when I am dismissed, there will be some people to welcome me into their house’.

»So he called his master's debtors one by one. He asked the first who came: ‘How much do you owe my master?’. The reply was: ‘A hundred jars of oil’. The steward said: ‘Here is your bill. Sit down quickly and write there fifty’. To the second he put the same question: ‘How much do you owe?’. The answer was: ‘A thousand measures of wheat’. Then he said: ‘Take your bill and write eight hundred’.

»The master commended the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the people of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the people of light».

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Today, the Gospel proposes a question, which, at first sight, is rather extraordinary.

St. Luke's text, indeed, says: «And the master commended the dishonest steward for his astuteness» (Lk 16:8).

It goes without saying we are not being told here to be deceitful in our relationship amongst ourselves, much less, with our Lord. It is not therefore a praise to which would simply be a dishonest steward. What Jesus actually manifests in this example is a grievance for the shrewdness in dealing with the matters of this world and the lack of true wit of the sons of light in building God's Kingdom: «The people of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the people of light» (Lk 16:8).

All this, proves —once again!— that men's hearts still have the same limits and miseries they have ever had. We, now, may speak of traffic of influence, corruption, unjustified wealth, counterfeiting documents... More or less, just as in Jesus' days.

But this poses a double question: Do we actually believe we can deceive God with our appearance, while pretending to be good Christians? And, when speaking of shrewdness, we should also speak of personal interest. Are we really interested in God's Kingdom and in his justice? Is it the mediocrity of our response as sons of light so frequent? Jesus also said «For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be» (Mt 6:21).

Which is for us our life's treasure? We should rather examine our desires so that we may find out where do we keep our treasure... St. Augustine tells us: «Your continuous yearning is your continuous voice. If you stop loving, your yearning will be silent».

Maybe today, before our Lord, we have to ponder which our guile, as sons of light, should be, that is, the sincerity of our relationship with God and our brothers. «Life is truly always a choice: between honesty and dishonesty, between fidelity and infidelity, between good and evil (...). Ultimately, Jesus says, it is necessary to make a fundamental decision» (Benedict XVI).