Thursday of the Third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 4:21-25): Jesus said to his disciples, “Is a lamp brought in to be placed under a bushel basket or under a bed, and not to be placed on a lampstand? For there is nothing hidden except to be made visible; nothing is secret except to come to light. Anyone who has ears to hear ought to hear.”

He also told them, “Take care what you hear. The measure with which you measure will be measured out to you, and still more will be given to you. To the one who has, more will be given; from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”

“Is a lamp brought in to be placed under a bushel basket or under a bed?”

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Today, Jesus explains to us the secret of His Kingdom. He is even somewhat ironic when telling us that the internal “energy” the Word of God has —which is His own Word—, that communicative force that spreads all over the world, is just like a light, and that this light cannot go “under a bushel basket or under a bed” (Mk 4:21).

Can you imagine someone so stupid as to place a lit candle under the bed? We Christians with the lights off or with the lights on, but with a ban on lighting us up! This is what happens when we do not place all our love and knowledge at the service of our Faith. How unnatural of us to selfishly retreat into ourselves, by limiting our life to the scope of our own personal interests! To live under the bed! Ridiculously and tragically not moving: “absent” of the spirit…

On the other hand, the Gospel is a saintly outburst of passionate Love that wants to communicate, that needs “to say”, and that carries along a demand of personal growth, of interior maturity and service to others. Saint Augustine says: “If you say: Enough! You are dead”; and Saint Josemaria Escrivà also says: “O Lord: let me have temperance and restraint in everything… except in Love!”

“‘Anyone who has ears to hear ought to hear.’ He also told them, ‘Take care what you hear’” (Mk 4:23-24). But, what does it mean “to hear”? What are we to hear? This is the great question we have to ask ourselves. It is an attitude of sincerity towards God that demands to know what we really want to do. And to find it out we must hear: we must pay attention to the hints of God. We have to enter into a dialogue

with Him to put an end to the “mathematics of measure”: “The measure with which you measure will be measured out to you, and still more will be given to you. To the one who has, more will be given; from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.” (Mk 4:24-25). God's accrued interests, are unpredictable and extraordinary, so as to stimulate our generosity.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Lord, grant me in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son and my God, the charity that cannot fail. Then my lamp will be lit and never go out; it will warm me and enlighten others.” (Saint Columbanus, abott)

- “Such obstacles are also present today, and we shall limit ourself to mentioning the lack of fervor. It is all the more serious because it comes from within. Lack of fervor is manifested in fatigue, disenchantment, compromise, lack of interest and above all lack of joy and hope.” (Saint Paul VI)

- “The whole of Christ's life was a continual teaching: his silences, his miracles, his gestures, his prayer, his love for people, his special affection for the little and the poor, his acceptance of the total sacrifice on the Cross for the redemption of the world, and his Resurrection are the actualization of his word and the fulfilment of Revelation.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 561)