Wednesday of the Fifth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 7:14-23): Jesus summoned the crowd again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile.”

When he got home away from the crowd his disciples questioned him about the parable. He said to them, “Are even you likewise without understanding? Do you not realize that everything that goes into a person from outside cannot defile, since it enters not the heart but the stomach and passes out into the latrine?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) “But what comes out of the man, that is what defiles him. From within the man, from his heart, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile.”

“Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person”

Fr. Norbert ESTARRIOL i Seseras
(Lleida, Spain)

Today Jesus teaches us that everything God has made is good. Rather, it is our wrong intention that can contaminate what we do. That is why Jesus Christ says: “Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile” (Mk 7:15). The experience of offending God is a reality. And Christians easily discover this deep trace of evil and see a world enslaved by sin. The mission that Jesus entrusts to us is to cleanse—with the help of his grace—all the contamination that the evil intentions of men have introduced into this world.

The Lord asks us to carry out all our human activity well: he expects us to put intensity, order, science, competence, and a desire for perfection into it, seeking no other goal than to restore God’s creative plan, which made everything good for the benefit of man: “Purity of intention. You will have it always if, always and in everything, you seek only to please God” (Saint Josemaría).

Only our will can spoil the divine plan, and we must be careful not to let this happen. Many times, vanity, self-love, discouragement due to lack of faith, impatience for not achieving the expected results etc. get in our way. For this reason, St. Gregory the Great warned us: “Let no seductive good fortune lead us astray, he is a foolish traveler who sees pleasant meadows on his journey and forgets where he is going.”

It will therefore be necessary to be attentive in the offering of works, to maintain the presence of God and to frequently consider divine filiation, so that our whole day – with prayer and work – takes its strength and begins in the Lord, and that everything we have begun for Him serves His purpose.

We can do great things if we realize that each of our human acts is co-redemptive when it is united to the acts of Christ.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Some believe that evil thoughts come from the devil and not from their own will. It is true that the devil can be a collaborator and instigator of evil thoughts, but he is not their author." (Saint Bede the Venerable)

- “It is in the human heart where the most intimate and, in a sense, the most essential plot of history unfolds.” (Saint John Paul II)

- “The heart is the dwelling-place where I am, where I live (...). It is the place of truth, where we choose life or death. It is the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation [with Him]: it is the place of covenant.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 2563)