

Monday of the Sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 8:11-13): The Pharisees came forward and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. He sighed from the depth of his spirit and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Amen, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.” Then he left them, got into the boat again, and went off to the other shore.

“Amen, I say to you, no sign will be given”

Fr. Jordi POU i Sabater
(*Sant Jordi Desvalls, Girona, Spain*)

Today, it looks like the Gospel does not say too much about Jesus or about us. “Why does this generation seek a sign?” (Mk 8:12). Commenting on this episode of Jesus' life, Saint John Paul II said: “Jesus invites us to discern between the words and the deeds testimony of (or a “sign of”) the arrival of God's Kingdom.” It seems the Pharisees questioning Jesus are lacking the capacity or the will to discern that sign which —in fact— is the entire manifestation, deeds and words, of the Lord.

Nowadays, Jesus is also asked for some heavenly signs: that He let us see His presence in our world or that He tells us in a clear cut manner how we are to behave. The Roman Pontiff makes us see that Jesus' refusal to give a sign to the Jews —and, consequently, to us, too— is due to the fact He wants to change the “world logic, oriented to look for signs confirming man's desire of assertiveness and power.” The Pharisees did not want just any sign, but one showing Jesus as the Messiah they wanted. They were not waiting for the Messiah coming to save them, but for the Messiah who was to give them the certainty they were doing things the right way.

In short, when the Jews in Jesus' time, or today's Christians, ask —one way or another— for a sign, what we are actually asking for, is for God to act according to our own way, that which we think is better and which also stands by our way of thinking. But God, who is omniscient and omnipotent (this is why in The Lord's

Prayer we say “your will be done”), has His own ways which, more often than not, we find it difficult to understand. But He, who allows us to find Him when we are truly looking for Him, if we beg Him to enlighten us, He will help us to understand which are His ways and how we can, today, distinguish His signs.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“There are three ways for wisdom or prudence to abound in you: if you confess your sins, if you give thanks and praise, and if your speech is edifying.” (Saint Bernard)

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“‘If you are God’s Son...’. He is ‘tested’ just as products are tested. The arrogance that would make God an object and impose our laboratory conditions upon him is incapable of finding Him.” (Benedict XVI)

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“The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him (...). Despite his evident miracles some people reject Jesus; he is even accused of acting by the power of demons.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 548)