Friday of the Seventh Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 10:1-12): Jesus came into the district of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds gathered around him and, as was his custom, he again taught them. The Pharisees approached him and asked, “Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?” They were testing him. He said to them in reply, “What did Moses command you?” They replied, “Moses permitted a husband to write a bill of divorce and dismiss her.” But Jesus told them, “Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate.”

In the house the disciples again questioned Jesus about this. He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

“As was his custom, He again taught them”

Fr. Miquel VENQUE i To
(Solsona, Lleida, Spain)

Today, dear Lord, I would like to say a little prayer to thank you for your teaching. You taught with authority, and took the opportunity to do so on every occasion they let you; as a matter of fact, I understand Lord that your basic mission was to transmit the Word of the Father. And you did it.

Today, while “connected” to the Internet, I ask you, Lord: Speak to me for, as a faithful disciple, I want to pray a little. First, I would like to ask the capacity to learn what you are teaching; and, secondly, I wish I would know how to teach it to others. I know it is easy to fail in the error of making you say something that you didn’t really say and, with malevolent daring, I change what you are saying to what I like to hear. I admit that I am, perhaps, more hard-hearted than those listeners.

I know your Gospel, the Teachings of the Church, the Catechism, and I remember Saint John Paul II's words in his Letter to Families: “The program of utilitarianism, based on an individualistic understanding of freedom —a freedom without responsibilities— is the opposite of love, even as an expression of human

civilization considered as a whole". Lord, turn me away from the desire for utilitarianism happiness, and turn me instead to your Divine Truth, which I so much need.

From this vantage point, like standing atop a mountain, I can see that You speak of marital love as the love that lasts forever, and that adultery —as any other grave offense to You, Lord of Life and Love— is the wrong way to happiness: "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her" (Mk 10:11).

I remember a young man who said: "Father, sin promises a lot, gives nothing and takes everything". Good Jesus, let me understand you, that I too may teach: "What God has joined together, no human being must separate" (Mk 10:9). Outside the Truth which you teach, there is no happiness. Jesus, teach me again!

Thank you Jesus, for I am hard-hearted, but I know you are right.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Here the Jews, who thought that they acted according to the intention of the law of Moses in putting away their wives, are made to see from the book of Moses that a wife should not be put away. And, by the way, we learn here, from Christ's own declaration, that God made and joined male and female." (Saint Augustine)

- "One of the greatest services that we Christians can render our fellow human beings is to offer them our serene and unhesitating witness as a family founded on the marriage of a man and a woman, safeguarding and promoting the family, since it is of supreme importance for the present and future of humanity." (Benedict XVI)

- "Divorce is immoral also because it introduces disorder into the family and into society. This disorder brings grave harm to the deserted spouse, to children traumatized by the separation of their parents and often torn between them, and because of its contagious effect which makes it truly a plague on society." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 2385)