Saturday of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 11:27-33): Jesus and his disciples returned once more to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple area, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders approached him and said to him, “By what authority are you doing these things? Or who gave you this authority to do them?” Jesus said to them, “I shall ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was John’s baptism of heavenly or of human origin? Answer me.”

They discussed this among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘Of heavenly origin,’ he will say, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’ But shall we say, ‘Of human origin’?” they feared the crowd, for they all thought John really was a prophet. So they said to Jesus in reply, “We do not know.” Then Jesus said to them, “Neither shall I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

“By what authority are you doing these things?”

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Today, the Gospel is asking us to think what our intentions are when we go to meet Jesus. Some go without faith, without recognizing His authority: this is why “the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders approached him and said to him, “By what authority are you doing these things? Or who gave you this authority to do them?” (Mk 11:27-28).

If our prayers do not turn to God, we have no faith. But, as Saint Gregory the Great says, “when we vehemently stand fast on prayer, Jesus halts to restitute the light because God stops in the heart which recovers the light it had lost.” If we have a good disposition, even if we are mistaken, believing the other person to be right, we shall welcome his words. If our intentions are good, even if we drag the weight of sin, when we pray, God will help us understand our misery, so that we can reconcile with Him, and may ask with all our heart his forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance.

Faith and prayer go together. Saint Augustine tells us “if faith is lacking, prayer is impossible. So, when we pray, let us believe and pray so faith is not lacking us. Faith produces prayer, and prayer, in turn, produces the strengthening of the faith.” If our intentions are good, and we turn to Jesus, we shall discover who is He and will understand his word, when He asks us: “Was John’s baptism of heavenly or of

human origin?” (Mk 11:30). Through the faith we know it was a work of God, and that His authority comes by way of his Father, who is God, and by Himself, for He is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

And because we know Jesus is the only savior of the world, we turn to his Mother who is also our Mother, so that we may receive Jesus' words and life, with good intention and good will, to relish in the peace and joy of the sons of God.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, so neither do anything without the bishop and presbyters. Neither endeavor that anything appear reasonable and proper to yourselves apart.” (Saint Ignatius of Antioch)

- “The teachings of Jesus and His actions are only understandable from His immediate contact with the Father” (Benedict XVI)

- “If the Law and the Jerusalem Temple could be occasions of opposition to Jesus by Israel's religious authorities, his role in the redemption of sins, the divine work par excellence, was the true stumbling-block for them.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 587)