Thursday of the Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 7,21-27): «Not everyone who says to me: 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my heavenly Father. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not speak in your name? Did we not cast out devils and perform many miracles in your name?'. Then I will tell them openly: 'I have never known you; away from me, you evil people!'.

»So, then, anyone who hears these words of mine and acts accordingly is like a wise man, who built his house on rock. The rain poured, the rivers flooded, and the wind blew and struck that house, but it did not collapse because it was built on rock. But anyone who hears these words of mine and does not act accordingly, is like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain poured, the rivers flooded, and the wind blew and struck that house; it collapsed, and what a terrible fall that was!».

«The will of my heavenly Father»

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we perceive that Jesus requires from us not only that we listen to his Word but, —most of all— that we consistently hold on to it. Hence, He says, «Not everyone (...) will enter the kingdom of heaven but the one who does the will of my heavenly Father» (Mt 7:21). Jesus Christ may personally stipulate such an issue because He is God, the Son of God.

That our faith must be lived «but in deed and truth» (1Jn 3:18) is something that has been proclaimed from the very beginning of Christianity. But Benedict XVI, in his encyclical Spe salvi, recalled it —we might say— in a modern language: «the Christian message is not only "informative" but "performative". That means: the Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known; it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing».

«I have never known you!» (Mt 7:23): God forbid we should ever have to listen one day to such stern words! We should pay attention to something that, eventually, may surprise us: Jesus Christ is personally concerned by our response (or "non-response") of faith; out of it He makes an issue of special distress. And it is the least to be expected: Christianity is not an ideology, or a simple ethics program; it is, above all, a personal commitment with Somebody. Along this same line, St. John Paul II emphasized that «Following Christ is thus the essential and primordial foundation of Christian morality».

It is very appropriate the likeness of the man «who built his house on sand»: irrational men, defeated men! (cf. Mt 7:26-27). A society without God (or that, in practice, walks out on the law of God) is a stranded society because it lacks the “driving power” of hope. When man gets away from God, man also gets away from man. On the other hand, «Happy those (…) for whom the law of the Lord is their joy; (…) they are like a tree planted near streams of water, that yields its fruit in season; Its leaves never wither; whatever they do prospers» (Psalm 1:1-3).