

Saturday of the Second Week of Advent

Gospel text (Mt 17:10-13): As they were coming down from the mountain, the disciples then asked Jesus, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” He said in reply, “Elijah will indeed come and restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they pleased. So also will the Son of Man suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

“Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they pleased”

Fr. Xavier SOBREVÍA i Vidal
(Sant Just Desvern, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we see Jesus talking with His disciples as they are coming down from the mountain, where they have just witnessed the Transfiguration. Our Lord hasn't taken up Peter's suggestion that they stay, and is answering the questions of the disciples as they descend. Those, who have just partaken momentarily in the glory of God, are surprised and don't understand how the Messiah could have come without the prophet Elijah coming first to prepare everything.

It turns out that the preparation has already been done. “But I tell you that Elijah has already come” (Mt 17:12): John the Baptist has prepared the way. But the men of the world don't recognize the men of God, nor do the prophets of the world recognize the prophets of God, nor do the arrogant of the world recognize the divinity of Jesus Christ.

A new way of looking and a new heart are necessary if the ways of God are to be recognized, and if we are to respond with cheerfulness and generosity to the demanding calls of those He has sent. Not everybody is willing to understand it, let alone live it. What's more the way we live our lives and our plans might be in opposition to God's will. An opposition that could turn into a struggle against, and a rejection of, Our Father in Heaven.

We need to discover the intense love that guides God's designs towards us and, if we are to be consistent with the faith and morality that Jesus reveals to us, we can't be surprised by the bad treatment, the slander and the persecutions. Being on the right track doesn't stop there being difficulties in life and He, despite the suffering, teaches us to keep on going.

We ask the Mother of Jesus, Queen of the Apostles, to intercede so that no one will be lacking a friend who, like the prophets, will bring them the Good News of salvation that is brought to us through the birth of Jesus Christ. We have the mission, you and I, to make sure that those people who cross paths with us experience Christmas in a more Christian way.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

-

“It is intolerable for love not to see the object of its longing. That is why whatever reward they merited was nothing to the saints if they could not see the Lord. It gave Moses the temerity to say: If I have found favor in your eyes, show me your face.” (St Peter Chrysologus)

-

“Elijah was granted a transformed version of the Sinai experience: He experienced God passing by, not in the storm or in the fire or in the earthquake, but in the still small breeze. That transformation is completed here. God’s power is now revealed in his mildness, his greatness in his simplicity and closeness.” (Benedict XVI)

-

“John is ‘Elijah (who) must come.’ (Mt 17:10-13). The fire of the Spirit dwells in him and makes him the forerunner of the coming Lord. In John, the precursor, the Holy Spirit completes the work of ‘[making] ready a people prepared for the Lord.’ (Lk 1:17).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 718)