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Monday's Gospel: Awakening the Desire for Holiness

Gospel for Monday in the 21st
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 23:13-22*)

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him

twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If any one swears by the temple, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, ‘If any one swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; and he who swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it; and he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

Commentary

During the next three days, the Gospel readings at Mass present us with Jesus' seven reproaches against the behavior of the scribes and Pharisees. Each of these complaints begins with the expression "Woe to you!" and expresses Christ's sorrow for the hardness of heart of those men.

He speaks to them forcefully and clearly, not to humiliate them publicly but because he ardently wants them to convert, to discover the beauty of God's Love.

Those men were called to be shepherds of their people, to be concerned about their material and spiritual needs; they were called to live for their people and become mediators between God's Love and human hearts. But they had become mere employees, blind guides.

All of us Christians too, without exception, are called to make the Love of the Father present among the people around us, and to awaken in their hearts the desire to respond generously to that Love.

Saint John Paul II said: “Every person is called, in one way or another, to spiritual fatherhood or motherhood, a sign of interior maturity. This vocation stems from the Gospel’s call to the perfection of which the “Father” is the supreme model. Therefore each person acquires the greatest resemblance to God when he or she becomes a spiritual father or mother.”

Jesus gives us his light and strength so that we can awaken in others the desire for holiness, and become communicators of optimism and hope. In short, so that we become a sign of His Mercy.

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