

Saturday's Gospel: A Kingdom of Love

Gospel for Saturday in the 15th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 12:14-21*)

But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all and ordered them not to make him known. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

“Behold, my servant whom I have
chosen,

my beloved with whom my soul is
well pleased.

I will put my Spirit upon him,

and he will proclaim justice to the
Gentiles.

He will not quarrel or cry aloud,

nor will anyone hear his voice in the
streets;

a bruised reed he will not break,

and a smoldering wick he will not
quench,

until he brings justice to victory;

and in his name the Gentiles will
hope.”

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Commentary

God, a good teacher, told the people of Israel that he could be found most easily in the whisper of a gentle breeze (cf. *1 Kgs 19:3-15*). Time and again the expectations of those people, who found it so difficult to rise above their way of understanding things, had to be corrected. But that is how Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah, came into the world: in the silence of the night and in an insignificant, secluded place. And that is how he carried out his mission: as the suffering Servant, whose voice is ignored and rejected (cf. *Is 42:1-4*).

Jesus is hurt by this rejection, but he isn't surprised. He knows the human heart. And yet, he accepts what he knows is coming. He has come to establish a Kingdom of love, a kingdom that Isaiah had also spoken about (cf. *Is 11:1-9*). "I came to cast

fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished!” (*Lk 12:49-50*). In today’s Gospel passage, we also read these words from Isaiah: “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased,” words that we now see as spoken by God the Father, and that people will later hear when Jesus is baptized in the Jordan.

Our Lord is eager to embrace the Cross that awaits him. Saint Paul said about himself: “one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead” (*Phil 3:13-14*). Perhaps we are dismayed to see Christ rejected by so many people. We should remember the Lord’s words to Samuel: “they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them” (*1 Sam 8:7*). And let us never

forget that true love, the love that will transform hearts and change the world, is tried and tested in sacrifice for the loved one: God and our fellow men and women. We give our lives out of love for God and for those we love with Christ's love. Christ has come to call sinners – that is, all of us – and he wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (cf. *1 Tim* 1:15; 2:4).

Juan Luis Caballero

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