

Saturday's Gospel: The Hope of Heaven

Gospel for Saturday in the 26th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 10: 17-24*)

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits

are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Then turning to the disciples he said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

Commentary

The disciples return from their mission rejoicing that they have experienced the power our Lord has given them to work miracles.

Jesus confirms that He has given them power over the enemy, but He also tells them what the true reason for their joy should be: the hope of heaven.

Jesus reorients our way of viewing the world. There are many pleasant things in this life, gifts from God to his children, but what should make us truly happy and excited is the union of Love that already begins here, and that will be fulfilled in heaven.

What is heaven? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us: “This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity – this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the

angels and all the blessed – is called 'heaven.' Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness" (no. 1024).

Maybe we think little about heaven. Thinking about heaven, about eternal happiness with God, strengthens our hope, fills us with joy, and helps us confront the difficulties in this life with the serenity of someone who knows that this is the path for attaining the fullness of Love. But this realization doesn't lead us to neglect our duties here on earth. Quite the opposite. Heaven is given by God to those who strive to make this world, through their love and self-giving to others, an antechamber to heaven.

We see Jesus filled with joy in the Holy Spirit, rejoicing that the small and humble are the ones who receive and truly understand the word of

God. Those who renounce pride are able understand the Word and believe in Jesus. While the wise and understanding – that is, those who think they are wise through their own wisdom and who fail to humbly acknowledge their ignorance – remain trapped in their blindness. Above all, in their failure to see in Jesus the Messiah, the one sent by God, God incarnate.

Jesus also tells us in a simple and sublime way that He is equal to the Father. We cannot know that Jesus is God if the Father does not give us the light of faith. And we cannot know who the Father is if Jesus does not reveal this to us.

The disciples are called blessed, happy, for having seen and heard Jesus, for having believed in Him. Faith is a gift from God, the greatest gift, for without faith there is no salvation. But we must humbly open

our heart to that gift and respond sincerely.

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