

Tuesday's Gospel: Gestures That Show Others They Are Loved

Gospel for Tuesday in the 11th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 5:43-48*)

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on

the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Commentary

How high the moral horizon is that our Lord presents to us in today’s Gospel passage! “You must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” To understand it well, we need to read it in the light of the new life that Jesus brings us. This is a life of grace, in which the Father gives us the spiritual forces to aspire to perfection.

The perfection to which Jesus calls us is not that of a “perfectionist.” It is not a matter of ensuring that all our deeds are the best possible and have no limitations. Rather it means striving to imbue all our actions with love for God, despite our defects. The important thing is to grow in charity. We need to let our Lord change our way of seeing and feeling, so that our heart becomes more like His. And then, gradually, this transformation will be reflected in our actions.

Today’s Gospel speaks clearly about charity. It speaks about getting along with everyone, without classifying people into “friends” and “enemies.” Sometimes we may meet people who seem to oppose us and we aren’t sure of the reason. Jesus invites us to not become discouraged and to continue treating them with kindness. Our Father God continues to see them as his children, and gives them the sun and the rain and takes care of them,

waiting for the moment of their conversion. Perhaps our patience can be the instrument that helps them to change their lives.

Many misunderstandings are resolved through gestures of love. When someone has lost trust, perhaps explanations are not well received. It is time for specific deeds, to win over the other person with daily details of affection. Saint Josemaría said that others can change their opinion of us “when they realize that you really love them. It is up to you” (Saint Josemaría, *Furrow*, no. 734). With God’s help, let us try to find the right gestures that help others to know they are loved.

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