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Tuesday's Gospel: Called to Conversion

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

Gospel (*Mt 11:20-24*)

Then Jesus began to upbraid the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent.

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on

the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.”

Commentary

Rarely are Jesus' words as strong as in this Gospel passage. Our Lord reproaches the people living in the places where he has spent the most time preaching. Bethsaida was the homeland of Philip, Andrew and Peter. There many miracles had been worked and many words of eternal life had been heard.

But our Lord's harshest words are reserved for Capernaum, the city that was his home for much of his public life. These cities deeply loved by Jesus, which had received the grace to witness the Redeemer's mission, had not believed fully; they had not been completely converted.

Jesus announces that if they do not convert they will have a fate worse than the pagan cities of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom, for which the Old Testament prophesied fearful punishments.

Bethsaida and Capernaum are an image of our own lives: small cities that God comes to visit, making them his home. But to receive Jesus we have to truly welcome Him and allow ourselves to be changed by his presence. We need to strive to live the new life that Jesus offers us, to make his Life our own.

Saint Josemaría reminded us that if this sometimes seems difficult, “the goodness of God wants to make the way easy for us. Let us not reject Jesus’ invitation; let us not say ‘no’ to him, turning a deaf ear to his voice. There is no excuse, we can no longer think we aren’t able” (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 15).

When the time comes for our life to be judged, here explicitly announced by Jesus, we want our Lord to tell us: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master” (*Mt* 25:21).

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