

Monday's Gospel: A Sign for This Generation

Gospel for Monday in the 6th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk* 8:11-13)

The Pharisees came and began to argue with Jesus, seeking from him a sign from heaven, to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.”

And he left them, and getting into the boat again he departed to the other side.

Commentary

Last Saturday we contemplated Jesus taking pity on the hungry crowd. With a few loaves he feeds them and all are satisfied. It is a prodigious sign from heaven. But today we are left disappointed. After the great miracle, the Pharisees confront Jesus and ask for another miracle. And Jesus is dismayed by their hardness of heart. The answer is a resounding no. No sign will be given.

Since they cannot defeat him with their arguments, they ask Christ to prove the truth of what he says with a sign from heaven. They believe in miracles, but not in the word of the person who works these miracles.

For they do not believe in Jesus. What's more, they reject him. They turn their backs on him with their attitude, and Jesus is forced to turn his back on them as well, resuming his journey by boat. It is not the first time that we see Jesus saddened by people's hardness of heart (cf. *Mk* 3:5).

What sign can be given to a heart that is hardened? None. Rather, the sign is to give them no sign. It must have been very painful for Jesus to have to leave them without being able to show mercy towards them. Perhaps it was the only solution, in order to provoke their possible conversion. As Saint Josemaría said, "Jesus is never distant or aloof. although sometimes in his preaching he seems very sad, because he is hurt by the evil men do. However, if we watch him closely, we will note immediately that his anger comes from love. It is a further invitation

for us to leave infidelity and sin behind.”^[1]

^[1] Saint Josemaria, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 162, homily “Finding Peace in the Heart of Christ.”

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