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Saturday's Gospel: The Beauty of Simplicity

Gospel for Saturday in the 10th
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 5:33-37*)

“Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one

hair white or black. Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.”

Commentary

In his preaching, our Lord invites everyone to be transparent, to be simple, to take off the masks that we can hide under, to avoid lies: “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one” (*Mt* 5:37). Jesus speaks harshly about hypocrites, while gratefully praising those in whom there is no duplicity or deceit (cf. *Jn* 1:47). The simple person is able to recognize himself and others as true children of God, who have to be cared for and loved.

The first Christians reflected clearly in their own lives this way of acting of Christ. In the letter of James, we

find the same request: “let your yes be yes and your no be no, that you may not fall under condemnation.” (*Jas* 5:12). We also see Saint Peter speaking about the need to reject all malice and guile and envy and all slander in order to be able to draw close to God. Christians are called to be like “newborn babes” who “long for the pure spiritual milk” (*1 Pet* 2:1-2).

Pope Francis has spoken energetically about the danger of hypocrisy, found in those who do not love the truth. They love only themselves, and thus they seek to deceive others, to implicate others in their own deception, in their lie. They have a lying heart, and cannot speak the truth. Like Saint Peter, he praises the innocence of children, who desire “pure spiritual milk.” A child is not a hypocrite, because it is not corrupted. “When Jesus tells us: let your way of speaking be: ‘yes,

yes,’ ‘no, no,’ with the soul of a child, he is telling us the opposite of what the corrupt say. Today let us ask the Lord that our way of speaking be that of simplicity, that of children, speaking as children of God: and therefore, speaking in the truth of love.”^[1] —

^[1] — Pope Francis, *Homily*, 4 June 2013.

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