

Monday's Gospel: Rash Judgments

Gospel for Monday in the 12th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt* 7:1-5)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck

out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

Commentary

Jesus instructs his disciples to be merciful when judging others. This is central to Christianity itself.

Whatever offense our neighbor may have committed, we who are Christ's disciples owe our salvation to our Lord, before whose tribunal we all must render an account. Our salvation stems from his extraordinary mercy, as his words on the Cross witness to: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (*Lk 23:34*).

We have access to all of God's mercy. But how can we expect it to apply to

us if we do not learn the lesson and practice mercy ourselves? Therefore, we should never condemn our neighbors. A disciple of Christ must be very positive towards others, and have a heart ready to forgive their faults, whether real or apparent.

Jesus may have been addressing especially the Pharisees when he spoke about the person with a log in his eye who unfairly judges others. But the teaching applies to everyone. Mercy prevents many evils. It goes directly against our hardness of heart, which is the height of pride, and closes us off from the action of the Holy Spirit.

The judgments we express are the result of our interior thoughts. Saint Josemaría said: “Never think badly of anyone, not even if the words or conduct of the person in question give you good grounds for doing so” (Saint Josemaría, *The Way*, 442).

Mercy is one of the most frequent themes in our Lord's preaching. We see him practicing it in his interaction with all kinds of people, even those whom the Law designated as sinners. He reached out to the "peripheries," a word used by Pope Francis to describe those who are not in a good place and need help. Therefore, following Jesus' example, Christians need to learn to love all types of people, to forgive them and never give up on them. This is the path of charity, which, as Saint Paul said, "is patient and kind . . . Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (*1 Cor* 13:4 and 7).

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