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Friday's Gospel: With Jesus, a Time of Joy

Gospel for Friday in the 22nd
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Lk* 5:33-39)

The scribes and Pharisees said to Jesus, “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.” And Jesus said to them, “Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from

them, and then they will fast in those days.”

He told them a parable also: “No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it upon an old garment; if he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine desires new; for he says, ‘The old is good.’”

Commentary

Today's Gospel continues a controversy between some Pharisees and Jesus. Just before this passage, Luke had spoken about Matthew's vocation and the dinner he

organized in his house. The Pharisees had reproached Jesus' disciples for eating with tax collectors and sinners and for breaking Jewish traditions. But Jesus replied by saying that it is the sick who need a doctor.

This attitude of the Pharisees, apparently stemming from their zeal for the law, reveals a lack of knowledge about the true meaning of the law and also a lack of right intention. For these Pharisees, fasting had an absolute value in itself. But they too also modified their fasts on special occasions. Jesus tells them that He is the "bridegroom" who is now present among them. Christ is the Messiah, the Bridegroom who is going to espouse the Church to Himself. Fasting has a meaning in the context of penitence, but now, while He is with the disciples, it is a time of joy.

Those Pharisees failed to recognize Jesus' true importance. Our deeds show what is in our heart. If when we go to Mass we truly have faith in Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, we will arrive on time and dress well, and take part actively. For what is being celebrated there is truly great

The second part of today's Gospel passage encourage us to delve deeper into the newness of Christ's presence among us. Fasting, a traditional Jewish practice, is good, and we Christians also practice it. But what we aspire to is a time of joy, when fasting will have lost its meaning because we are with God forever.

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