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Saturday's Gospel: "A servant is not greater than his master"

Gospel for Saturday in the 5th
Week of Easter, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Jn* 15:18-21)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world

hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all this they will do to you on my account, because they do not know him who sent me."

Commentary

These days we have been listening to Jesus' words to his disciples about his commandment of fraternal love: they are to follow the example He himself has given them, an example that will help the world to know and welcome Jesus and his saving message. But he also warns them of a force contrary to that love: the hatred present in the world. Jesus has been the target of that hatred, and so will his disciples. But they should not be surprised or

afraid. Persecution is not a sign of a curse or a reason to give up; quite the opposite. The Master had already told them: “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven” (*Mt 5:11-2*).

The world, created good by the all-loving hands of God, has been undermined by the influence of the evil one and of our sins. But Christ’s saving doctrine is more powerful. If the disciples faithfully proclaim it, the world will abandon the path of hating its Creator and be saved. Jesus’ words to Nicodemus fill us with hope: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the

world might be saved through him” (*Jn* 3:16-17).

Saint Josemaria wrote: “The ‘non serviam’ of Satan has been too fruitful. Don’t you feel the generous urge to say each day, with a willingness to pray and work, a ‘serviam’ – I will serve you, I will be faithful! – which will surpass in fruitfulness that cry of revolt?” (*The Way*, 413). Jesus invites us to be his witnesses in the middle of the world, firm in our faith, hope and love. And if we ever experience rejection of the Gospel message, let us remember the Master’s words: “a servant is not greater than his master,” and his firm promise: “to him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God” (*Rev* 2:7).

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