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Thursday's Gospel: Woe to you!

Gospel for Thursday in the 28th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 11:47-54*)

“Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. So you are witnesses and consent to the deeds of your fathers; for they killed them, and you build their tombs. Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,’ that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the

world, may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it shall be required of this generation. Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.”

As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard, and to provoke him to speak of many things, lying in wait for him, to catch at something he might say.

Commentary

“Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge.”

Jesus with great sorrow reproaches the Pharisees for the tremendous evil they were doing. Instead of helping people to recognize the Messiah in Jesus, they did quite the opposite. Instead of opening the door and letting people enter, they closed it. They put themselves in God's place as stewards of his wisdom.

Jesus' attitude is quite different: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (*Mt 11:28*). Jesus offers salvation to everyone and what he asks of us is faith and humility. He asks us to recognize the truth and to love it.

Walking beside our Lord also means being humble. Saint Teresa of Jesus said: "Once I was pondering why our Lord was so fond of this virtue of humility, and this thought came to me – in my opinion not as a result of reflection but suddenly: It is because

God is supreme Truth; and to be humble is to walk in truth, for it is a very deep truth that of ourselves we have nothing good.”^[1] —

Humility is needed to walk close beside our Lord. Pride closes us in ourselves, making us think we possess the truth. Humility, in contrast, opens our heart to the truth by recognizing that we do not know everything. Walking in the truth means having broad horizons. Humility also leads us to realize that we are instruments in God's hands to help others on the path of faith.

This is what Jesus tells us with his words today: “you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.” Jesus wants to make use of us, of our life and example, to make it easier for others to encounter him.

I was reminded of something I read a few months ago, regarding the death

of a good Christian. They said he had these words from Saint Josemaría on his work table: “this man is a Christian, because he does not hate, because he is able to understand, because he is not a fanatic, because he controls his passions, because he is willing to make sacrifices, because he shows he is a man of peace, because he knows how to love.”^[2] —

To be good channels of God’s grace, we need to fight so that others can discover Christ in our actions.

^[1] Saint Teresa, *The Interior Castle*, 6, 10.

^[2] Saint Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 122.

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