

Thursday's Gospel: Giving Good Example

Gospel for Thursday in the 7th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 9:41-50*)

Jesus said to his disciples,

“Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward.

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great

millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea. And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

“For every one will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Commentary

Salt adds flavor to food. Christ's disciples are called to give "spiritual flavor" to those around them, above all by their good example, which spreads through imitation and permeates the entire society.

Jesus warns us, however, that bad example will be punished. Since Christians are called to set a standard for others, if they set a bad example they can easily cause others to stumble into sin. Our Lord's words here are very strong: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea." Everything in us that could lead to sin has to be "cut off" or "plucked out."

What is true for an individual is also true for a community. The Christian spirit within a community cannot be

taken for granted; it needs to be nourished and strengthened or the danger exists that it will deteriorate over time and end up being lost completely.

Therefore, as Saint Josemaría insisted, we Christians need to strive to bring the leaven of the Christian message to the society around us, bearing witness with our daily lives (cf. *Conversations*, no. 59). The way we act, speak, look upon others and even think must reflect Christ's example and teachings.

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