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Saturday's Gospel: Listening and Acting

Gospel for Saturday in the 27th
Week of Ordinary Time, with
commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 11:27-28*)

As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!”

But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Commentary

In the Gospel for today's Mass we see the conclusion of a long conversation between Jesus and the crowd, which Saint Luke recounts in chapter 11.

This chapter begins with the disciples' request that Jesus teach them to pray, which the Master responds to with the *Our Father*.

Then we are shown the need to pray trustingly to our Father God. Finally, our Lord's words become harsher as he encounters the opposition and disbelief of some who refuse to believe in Him.

Today's Gospel passage should be read in this context. There we see that Jesus not only encounters opposition wherever he goes, but also great enthusiasm, so much so that one day a woman from the crowd raised her voice in praise:

"Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you

nursed!” This woman was able to recognize something extraordinary in our Lord, joyfully surprised by his words and deeds.

The Master’s response may initially surprise us too. He seems to respond to this outpouring of affection with harsh words. But in reality he wants to invite that woman to persevere in paying close attention to his words. Jesus knows very well that many people begin to follow him with great enthusiasm but fail to persevere. He had already made this clear in the parable of the sower, speaking about some who “when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away” (*Lk 8:13*).

So our Lord urges her to build on secure ground, to lay the foundations on rock (cf. *Lk 6:47-49*), not only listening to his words and responding with affection but putting

his words into practice. As Saint Josemaría tells us in a point from *The Way* that reflects an experience from his own life: “There is a story of a soul who, on saying to our Lord in prayer, ‘Jesus, I love you,’ heard this reply from heaven: ‘Love means deeds, not sweet words’” (no. 933).

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