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Wednesday's Gospel: The Fire of Christ's Love

Gospel for Wednesday in the
21st Week of Ordinary Time,
and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 23:27-32*)

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Thus you witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.”

Commentary

Today's Gospel passage contains Jesus' two final reproaches to the scribes and Pharisees because of their hypocrisy. Our Lord uses a powerful and graphic image, comparing them to tombs that on the outside appear clean and white, but

on the inside are filled with bones and filth.

Those men have put on a mask to hide their own wretchedness, in order to be admired and pretend to be what they are not. Perhaps that is why Jesus cannot tolerate hypocrisy, because it means hiding what we truly are.

God has poured out all of his Love into each of us, giving us our own originality and beauty.

By hiding our own wretchedness and sins, we don't allow God to remake and renew us, to enter into the depths of our heart and take up his dwelling place here. Therefore to defeat hypocrisy we need to learn to accuse ourselves.

As Pope Francis advised, we have to open our soul to God and tell him simply: "I have done this, I have had this bad thought. I am envious, I

would like to harm that person... what is inside, the truth of our own heart, and say it before God. This is a spiritual exercise that is not common or usual, but we need to strive to do it: to accuse ourselves, to see the sin in ourselves, the hypocrisy and evil that is in our hearts. Because the devil sows evil. And we need to tell our Lord: Look, Lord, what I am! And to say it with humility.”

We have many miseries, but at the same time we have all the Mercy of a God who renews us with his Life and Love each time we go to Him with a contrite heart. Thus our heart will not be the dwelling place of selfishness and pride, but of the fire of Christ's Love.

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