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Thursday's Gospel: The Trawling Net

Gospel for Thursday in the 17th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 13:47-53*)

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; when it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad. So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous, and throw them into the furnace of

fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.

“Have you understood all this?” They said to him, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there,

Commentary

Jesus speaks about fishing with a trawling net that collects everything it finds. When dragged it collects fish, algae and any object it encounters in the water.

“The Lord found his first disciples among boats and nets, and he often

compared the work of souls to fishing,” Saint Josemaría said. “Do you remember the miraculous catch, when the nets were breaking? We could compare the apostolic work of fishing, open to all souls, to the text from Saint Matthew which speaks about ‘a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.’ They were of all species and sizes, because everything that swims in the waters of the sea gets caught in its meshes.”^[1] Indeed, God wants all men and women, of every background, race and condition, to enjoy eternal happiness in his Kingdom. He does not exclude anyone from his call to friendship with him. Although not everyone will necessarily accept his call.

God’s salvific will embraces everyone, and each can freely accept or reject it. Just as the fishermen on the shore separate what is good from the unsuited in the net, so it will be at

the end of time. The Catechism teaches: “Christ will judge with the power he has gained as the Redeemer of the world who came to bring salvation to all. The secrets of hearts will be brought to light as well as the conduct of each one toward God and toward his neighbor. Everyone, according to how he has lived, will either be filled with life or damned for eternity. In this way, ‘the fullness of Christ’ (*Ephesians* 4:13) will come about in which ‘God will be all in all’ (*1 Corinthians* 15:28).”^[2]

Jesus speaks clearly about very serious issues. At stake is welcoming and receiving the eternal happiness that he has come to offer to everyone. But it is also possible to reject it.

^[1] Saint Josemaría, *In Dialogue with the Lord*, “With the docility of clay,” pp. 40-41.

^[2]Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 135.

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