

Saturday's Gospel: God's Special Love for Children

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

Gospel (*Mk* 10:13-16)

“People were bringing children to Jesus, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, “Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

Commentary

After listening yesterday to Jesus' teaching about the indissolubility of marriage, we see in this passage some children who were presented to Jesus. Once a man and woman are united forever in marriage, children appear on the scene, the fruit of their union. The evangelist doesn't make clear who was bringing these children but we can assume it was the parents. For Jesus' fame was growing. He had healed the sick, including young children. It is easy to imagine the parents bringing their small children to Jesus so that He would bless them, so that, by the laying on of hands, or just by

touching them, He would protect them from illness and the power of the evil one.

But the disciples think they have the authority to prevent this. And the Master rebukes them, because He is the Way to reach the Father. As He will tell one of the disciples: “No one comes to the Father except through me” (cf. *Jn* 14:6). Children find in Jesus the best way to discover their divine filiation. At the same time, adults – especially parents – are called to facilitate this encounter, so that they too rediscover their own filiation to the Father: “Whoever receives one of these children in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me receives not me, but him who sent me” (cf. *Mk* 9:37).

It is moving to see Jesus surrounded by children, interacting with them, smiling at them, asking them their names. He tells them to be good

children of their parents, good brothers and sisters, and also speaks about their Heavenly Father. It was both an earthly and heavenly scene at the same time: a clear manifestation of what the Kingdom of Heaven must be on earth, and a reflection of what that Kingdom will be like in the next life for those who have behaved as children before God on earth. That is why we want to welcome with humility Saint Josemaría's advice: "Don't forget that our Lord has a special love for little children and for those who become as little children" (*The Way*, no. 872).

Josep Boira

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