

Saturday's Gospel: Jesus Doesn't Exclude Anyone

Gospel for Saturday in the 1st Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 2:13-17*)

Jesus went out again beside the sea; and all the crowd gathered about him, and he taught them. And as he passed on, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

And as he sat at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were

sitting with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”

Commentary

All the crowd gathered about him. What did they see in Jesus' face, in how he looked at them, and find in his words, that attracted so many sinful men and women to draw close to his Most Holy Humanity? Jesus wants to continue working miracles today in so many hearts, and he counts on our face, our look, our

words to continue doing so. We need to imitate him if we want to be his co-workers.

This Gospel passage about Matthew's vocation reveals to us a beautiful truth about Jesus' heart, about his way of being. Our Lord did not exclude anyone. The Master let himself be invited and even invited himself to eat with people that society had turned its back on. Jesus does not ask about a person's ideology or race. He simply looks into the heart with tenderness, knocks on the door, and if the person opens it, he enters.

He was a guest in the house of Matthew, a tax collector, someone who was "despicable" in the eyes of the other Jews. A Jewish tax collector was seen as a collaborator with the Roman power occupying the country, and was often corrupt and an extortionist. The Jewish authorities

and society refused to associate with such a person. But Jesus is not put off by the fear of what people will say or the fact that someone is a sinner. For he has come as the Savior of all men and women. Jesus loves Matthew and nothing else matters.

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