

28TH WEEK YEAR A

MONDAY 28TH WEEK

"This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign"

Fr. Raimondo M. SORGIA Mannai OP (*San Domenico di Fiesole, Florencia, Italy*)

Today the gentle—but firm—voice of Christ warns those who think they already have a “ticket” to Paradise simply because they say, “Jesus, how beautiful you are!” Christ paid the price of our salvation without excluding anyone, but there are some essential conditions. One of them is this: we cannot expect Christ to do everything while we do nothing. That would not only be foolish—it would be prideful and wicked. This is why the Lord uses the word “evil” today: “This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it, except the sign of Jonah” (Lk 11:29). He calls it “evil” because it insists on seeing spectacular miracles before offering even a reluctant act of faith.

Even in His hometown of Nazareth, Jesus refused to yield to such demands. His countrymen, so full of expectations, wanted Him to prove His mission as prophet and Messiah through dazzling signs—something they could admire as spectators, comfortably seated, as if in a theater. But that is not how salvation works. The Lord offers salvation only to those who submit to Him through an obedience born of faith—faith that waits, trusts, and remains silent. God asks for that prior faith (which, in fact, He Himself has planted in us as a seed of grace).

A witness against believers who cling to a caricature of faith will be the Queen of the South, who came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom. And yet, “there is something greater than Solomon here” (Lk 11:31). As the saying goes, “There’s none so deaf as those who will not hear.” Christ, condemned to death, will rise on the third day. To those who recognize Him, He offers salvation; but for those who reject Him—when He returns as Judge—

nothing will remain but to hear the sentence of their own stubborn unbelief.

Let us welcome Him now, with faith and love that come before seeing. Then we will recognize Him, and He will recognize us as His own. As the Servant of God, blessed Don Alberione, once said: "God does not waste light; He kindles little lamps only as needed—but always at the right time."

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

"Because Solomon had built a temple to the Lord, because the Solomon of history had built that temple, our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Solomon, built a temple for himself" (St. Augustine)

"Still today, for the "modern Nineveh", God is looking for messengers of penance. Will we have the courage, the deep faith, the credibility necessary to reach hearts and open the doors to conversion?" (Benedict XVI)

"Only the divine identity of Jesus' person can justify so absolute a claim as "He who is not with me is against me" (Mt 12:30); and his saying that there was in him "something greater than Jonah, . . . greater than Solomon", something 'greater than the Temple...'" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n° 590)

TUESDAY 28TH WEEK

"But as to what is within, give alms, and behold, everything will be clean for you."

Fr. Pedro IGLESIAS Martínez (*Ripollet, Barcelona, Spain*)

Today, the evangelist places Jesus at a dinner table: "A Pharisee invited him to dine at his home" (Lk 11:37). What an interesting idea that turned out to be! One can only imagine the host's expression when his guest ignored the ritual washing custom (which was not a commandment of the Law but a tradition of the ancient rabbis) and then boldly reproached both him and his whole social group. That Pharisee chose the wrong day for his invitation—and Jesus'

behavior, as we might say today, was far from “politically correct.”

The Gospels show us that the Lord cared little about appearances or what people might say; “political correctness” was never His concern. And for that reason, neither should it be the rule of conduct for anyone who calls himself a Christian. Jesus clearly condemns the kind of double standard that masks convenience or deceit: “Oh you Pharisees! Although you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, inside you are filled with plunder and evil. You fools!” (Lk 11:39). As always, God’s Word challenges the customs of our daily life, where we often end up turning falsehoods into “values” that disguise our pride, selfishness, and vanity—an attempt to “globalize” morality under what is socially acceptable, so as not to stand out or be left out, no matter the cost, no matter how dark it leaves our soul. After all, we tell ourselves, “everyone does it.”

Saint Basil said: “there is nothing which a prudent man must shun more carefully than living with a view to popularity.” If we are to be witnesses of Christ, we must remember that the truth is—and will always remain—the truth, even when it rains down spears upon us. This is our mission among the people we live with: to remain clean in spirit, following the model of humanity that God reveals to us in Christ.

True purity of heart goes far beyond social appearances. And if ever doubt arises, let us remember the Lord’s promise: “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.” Each of us must decide where to set our gaze—for time, and for all eternity.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

"Things seem less difficult to us when we see them done in others" (Saint Ambrose)

"Faith goes first of all from the word to the idea, but it always has to return from the idea to the word and to the action" (Benedict XVI)

"Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues..." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n° 2.223)

WEDNESDAY 28TH WEEK YEAR A

"These you should have done, without overlooking the others"

Fr. Joaquim FONT i Gassol(Igualada, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we can see how the Divine Master gives us a few lessons: amongst them, He speaks of the tithe and also of the coherence educators (parents, teachers and all Christian believers) must have. In today's Mass, the teachings of St. Luke's Gospel appear in a somewhat synthesized form, but Matthew's parallel passages (23:1...) are more comprehensive and concrete. Our Lord's entire line of thought infers that at the heart and soul of our activity there must be justice, charity, mercy and faith (cf. Lk 11:42).

The Old Testament tithing and our present collaboration with the Church, according to laws and norms, follow the same principle. Notwithstanding, to apply the principle of a mandatory law to small things —as the Masters of the Law used to do— is exaggerated and wearing: "Woe also to you scholars of the law! You impose on people burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not lift one finger to touch them" (Lk 11:46).

It is true that sensible people can show true instances of unselfishness. We have recent personal experiences of people who, out of their harvest, have given to the Church —for worship and the poor— the 10% (tithe); of others, who reserve their first flower (their choicest fruits), or the best fruits of their orchard; or, of others, who come to offer the same amount they have spent on their holiday vacation; and, of others, who just bring the pick of their work for

the same purpose. One can guess all of them have assimilated the influence of the Holy Spirit. Love is imaginative; from small things it manages to take out joy and merits before God.

The good shepherd goes before the flock. Good parents are models to follow: example attracts. Good educators make a point of living by the virtues they teach. This is being coherent. Not only to a point, but fully: living a life close to the tabernacle, the devotion to the Mother of God, some small services at home, spreading good Christian humor... "Great souls pay much attention to little things" (Saint Josemaria Escrivá).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

"Do everything for Love. So there will be no small things: everything will be great. Perseverance in small things for Love is heroism". (Saint Josemaria)

«Many can know science, even theology. But if they do not do this theology on their knees, that is, humbly, like the little ones, they will not understand anything" (Francis)

"Jesus... often argued within the framework of rabbinical interpretation of the Law. Yet Jesus could not help but offend the teachers of the Law, for he was not content to propose his interpretation alongside theirs but taught the people "as one who had authority, and not as their scribes"." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 581)

THURSDAY 28TH WEEK YEAR A

"Woe to you who build the memorials of the prophets whom your fathers killed"

Fr. Pedro-José YNARAJA i Díaz (*El Montanyà, Barcelona, Spain*)

Today, we are faced with the meaning, acceptance, and treatment given to prophets: "I will send to them prophets and apostles; some of them they will kill and persecute" (Luke 11:49). They are people of all social or religious backgrounds who have received the divine message and have been imbued with it; driven by the Spirit, they express it with signs or words understandable to

their time. It is a message conveyed through speeches, never flattering, or actions, almost always difficult to accept. One characteristic of prophecy is its discomfort. The gift is bothersome for those who receive it, as it stings them internally, and it is uncomfortable for those around them, who today, thanks to the Internet and satellites, can reach the entire world.

The prophet's contemporaries seek to condemn him to silence, slander him, discredit him, and so on until his death. Then comes the time to erect his tomb and organize tributes, when he is no longer a nuisance. Today, there is no shortage of prophets who enjoy universal fame. Mother Teresa, John XXIII, Archbishop Romero... Do we remember what they demanded and demanded of us? Do we put into practice what they showed us? Our generation will be held accountable for the ozone layer it has destroyed, for the desertification our waste of water has caused, but also for the ostracism to which we have reduced our prophets.

There are still people who reserve for themselves the "exclusive right to knowledge," who share it—at best—with their own people, with those who allow them to continue riding high in their successes and fame. People who block the path of those trying to enter the realms of knowledge, lest they know as much as they do and surpass them: "Woe to you, scholars of the law! You have taken away the key of knowledge. You yourselves did not enter and you stopped those trying to enter" (Luke 11:52).

Now, as in Jesus' time, many analyze phrases and study texts to discredit those whose words inconvenience us: Is this our way of doing things? "There is nothing more dangerous than judging the things of God with the words of men" (Saint John Chrysostom).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

“For those who are called sons, and are not sons, what profiteth them the name where the thing is not? So, many are called Christians, and yet in deeds are not found such; because they are not this which they are called, that is, in life, in manners, in faith, in hope, in charity.” (Saint Augustine)

“Moral posturing is part and parcel of temptation. It does not invite us directly to do evil, which would be far too blatant. It pretends to show us a better way.” (Benedict XVI)

“In all of his life Jesus presents himself as our model. He is ‘the perfect man’, who invites us to become his disciples and follow him. In humbling himself, he has given us an example to imitate, through his prayer he draws us to pray, and by his poverty he calls us to accept freely the privation and persecutions that may come our way.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 520)

October 15th: Memorial of Saint Teresa of Jesus,

Virgin and Doctor of the Church

“You have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike”

Fr. Ferran JARABO i Carbonell *(Agullana, Girona, Spain)*

Today, we celebrate the feast of Saint Teresa of Avila. The Gospel, proclaimed in the feast of this Doctor of the Church, recommends to us the naturalness of children, so that we can be entrusted in the Father's hands: “Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike” (Mt 11:25). Jesus had said about children: “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Mt 19:14). To be like children does not imply to remain in a sort of permanent psychological infantilism. A child lets his father most willingly guide him. With each new step a child discovers new things his parents show him. Children take their first critical steps by holding their parents' loving hands. To abide by the Father's will is

what we are asking each time we say the Lord's Prayer, and this is the fundamental characteristic of whoever wants to be like a child. "Who worried about you before you were born, would not worry about you once He gave you life? He who created you is also who supports you" (Saint Augustine). Everything is subject to God's providence.

God, our Father, never forsakes us. But, we can trust and put ourselves into God's hands. Today's Gospel invites us to trust him, who is always with us. Today, being confident and humble is not fashionable, but it certainly is the only way to reach God. Saint Teresa expressly confirms it: "I have seen clearly that it is by this door that we must enter if we wish his Sovereign Majesty to show us great secrets [Jesus' contemplation]. I want no other way (...). This way must be freely taken, by surrendering us to God's hands."

Let us ask ourselves, especially today, how is our life: do we keep quiet to let God speak? Shall we pray abandoning ourselves in his hands? But to confide and be humble are two things we have to learn in the Church, our Mother! Do we humbly trust in her and love her?

FRIDAY 28TH WEEK YEAR A

"Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows"

Fr. Salomon BADATANA Mccj (Wau, South Sudan)

Today, we contemplate in the Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ who turns to the crowds after confronting the Jewish religious authorities who are the Pharisees and the scribes. The Gospel tells us that the crowd was so big that they crushed one another. It is clear here that they were hungry to hear the words of Jesus who spoke with an extraordinary authority to their religious leaders.

But St. Luke informs us that before anything else, Jesus began speaking to His

own disciples saying: “Beware of the leaven—that is, the hypocrisy—of the Pharisees” (Lk 12:1). Our Lord Jesus Christ wants to lead us to practice sincerity and transparency rather than hypocrisy as the Pharisees and the scribes do. For they show an external attitude which does not conform to their interior way of life: they pretend to be who they are not.

It is against this that our Lord Jesus Christ warns us in today’s Gospel when He says: “There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known” (Lk 12:2). Yes, everything will be revealed. This is why we ought to try to accord our life with what we profess and proclaim. This is obviously not easy. But we don’t have to be afraid for our God is in control. As St. John Paul II said “God’s love doesn’t impose burdens upon us that we cannot carry... For whatever He asks of us, He provides the help that is needed.” Nothing happens that He is not aware of. Even our hairs have been numbered. Yes we have a price before God. Let’s not be afraid because His love for us is endless.

Lord, grant us the wisdom to well match our life to the exigencies of our faith, even amidst the tumults of this world. Amen.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

“Do not fear any external enemy, conquer yourself; then, you will triumph over the whole world.” (Saint Augustine)

“Coherence between faith and testimony in our daily life. This is a Christian!, not so much in what he says, but in what he does, and the way in which he behaves. This coherence, which gives us life, is a grace of the Holy Spirit which we must ask for.” (Francis)

"The hierarchy of creatures is expressed by the order of the "six days", from the less perfect to the more perfect. God loves all his creatures and takes care of each one, even the sparrow..." (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 342)

SATURDAY 28TH WEEK YEAR A

“Everyone who acknowledges me before others the Son of Man will acknowledge”

Fr. Alexis MANIRAGABA *(Ruhengeri, Rwanda)*

Today, the Lord arouses our faith and hope in Him. Jesus foresees that we will have to appear before the Heavenly Host to be examined. And whoever has spoken out in favor of Jesus by adhering to His mission “the Son of Man will acknowledge before the angels of God.” (Lk 12:8). Such public confession is made in words, in deeds and throughout our lives.

This interpellation of the confession is even more necessary and urgent in our times, when there still are people who do not want to hear the voice of God nor follow His way. However, the confession of our faith will be strongly followed. Therefore, let us not be confessors for fear of punishment –that will be harsher for apostates– nor for the copious rewards reserved for the faithful. Our testimony is necessary and urgent for life in this world, and God himself demands it from us, as St. John Chrysostom said: “God is not satisfied with our inward faith; He asks for an outward and public confession, to boost us to a greater confidence and love.”

Our confession is sustained by the power and assurance of the Spirit who is active in us and protects us. The acknowledgement of Jesus Christ before His angels is vital since this fact will allow us to see Him face to face, live with Him and be flooded by His light. At the same time, the opposite will be nothing less than suffering and losing our life, to be deprived of His light and dispossessed of all our possessions. Let us, therefore, plead for the grace to avoid any denials be they out of fear of torture or ignorance; out of heresies, out of sterile faith or lack of responsibility; or simply because we would like to avoid martyrdom. Let us be strong; the Holy Spirit is with us! And “With the Holy Spirit, Mary is always present... and she has made possible the missionary outburst which took place at Pentecost” (Pope Francis).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

"This impenitence then is the blasphemy of the Spirit, which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. This impenitence, in one word, has no forgiveness neither in this world, nor in the world to come." (Saint Augustinus)

"The Church needs everyday saints, those of ordinary life. They are the witnesses who lead the Church forward; and affirm it with coherence of life and with the strength of the Holy Spirit which they have been given." (Francis)

" (...) There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss."
(Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 1864)

October 17th: Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Antioch,

Bishop and Martyr

***"Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat;
but if it dies, it produces much fruit"***

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench (*Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona,
Spain*)

Today we contemplate the image of the grain of wheat that dies bearing much fruit (cf. Jn 12,24): it is Christ himself, not only metaphorically or symbolically, but literally. It's not about simple pretty words. Indeed, Jesus gave us his sacrifice of the Cross beforehand, becoming "bread" for us. Here are the textual words he spoke in the Cenacle: "Take and eat all of it, because this is my body crushed by you." Christ has become wheat so we can eat it and bear fruit!

Saint Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and contemporary martyr of the apostolic era (35-108), lived a martyrdom of striking resemblance to that of Christ. In the first place, because, like the Master, he did not find death in the blink of an eye.

Jesus revealed from the beginning of his public ministry what his destiny was going to be: he knew where he was going and looked forward to his hour (cf. Lk 12,50).

The martyr bishop of Antioch, for his part, traveled as a prisoner on a long journey from Syria to imperial Rome, where he was to be executed. The journey to martyrdom lasted several weeks. During this journey, Ignatius wrote 7 beautiful letters to various Christian communities (Ephesus, Philadelphia, Smyrna ...). These writings are a privileged testimony of the faith and life of the first Christian generations. Ignatius, like Christ, knew very well where he was going. The enthusiasm, belief and love with which he expected martyrdom are impressive.

There is also a second aspect of the martyrdom of Saint Ignatius of Antioch that recalls especially the surrender of Jesus. In his letter "Ad Romanos" he affirms that he wanted to "be the wheat of God, may I be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, so as to be made pure bread." What a beautiful fruit! identified with Jesus-Crucified and similar to Jesus-Eucharist. Centuries have passed and we have never lacked the fruit of the Eucharist: God has made it much easier for us than for Saint Ignatius! Hopefully we do not lack the purity and enthusiasm of Saint Ignatius of Antioch!

- REF. EVANGELI

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