

Reflections

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The Tree and Its Fruits

The Gospel is made up of different comparisons, images and maxims of Jesus. I want to pause for a while on one of the many comparisons: that of the tree and its fruits.

By means of this image, the Gospel gives us a criterion of discernment, a lesson of supernatural prudence. To judge a man, a Movement, a doctrine, we should not let ourselves be carried away by appearances or statements. We should not focus on words, but should look at works and achievements. “Each tree is known for its fruits,” Jesus reminds us.

Therefore we are not so quickly convinced. We like to know the fruits, observe the effectiveness, focus on the deeds and the results. We want to observe the creative resultant!

But still more advantageous for us is using this criterion, not only in what refers to others, but to also use with ourselves. Thus we will know if we are really authentic Christians or not.

We are also like the trees, and the question is if we produce useful fruits, delicious fruits, beneficial for God and others.

Are the brethren comforted and fed by us? Do they come to us when they need advice, help or a service?

And there fits that other word of Jesus which is so clear and blunt: “Not everyone who calls me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only those who do what my Father in heaven wants them to do” (MT 7,21).

Often we say: “Lord, Lord.” But this is not enough if it does not change our daily life, if it does not lead us to fulfill the Will of the Father.

And the Will of the Father demands justice for us with those who depend on us, love for those around us, help for those who need it.

Why gather in Church every week to fulfill some rituals and prayers if when we leave nothing has changed in our heart, in our behavior, in our customs? Why participate in Sunday Mass if when we leave we do not love each other more than before, if we do not reconcile with the brethren who are distant?

That is the danger of all religions: to perform gestures and rituals without changing daily behavior. To bank on our Sunday Masses will not help us at all, when the Day of Judgment arrives: only those who fulfill the Will of the Father will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Or our confessions. Our confessions are worthless if they do not teach us to forgive, also ourselves and those who have offended us. There is only one thing for which God cannot forgive us: that we ourselves do not forgive others. We have not truly received forgiveness if we have not transmitted it to others. We have not known the love of God if we have not loved our brethren.

Christ has wanted a religion in spirit and truth, not a religion of phrases and shams.

The fruits we give should be witnesses of the Divine Life within us. Our conduct should correspond to our faith. Our love for mankind should test our love for God.

Dear brothers and sisters, as we leave each Eucharist, hopefully something will change, not only in our love for God, but also in our relationship with our brethren.

Questions for reflection

1. Can I say that Masses produce a change for the better in me?
2. Do I go to communion when I am annoyed with a brother?

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