

12. October 2020

“Responsibility for the faith”

Lk 11:29-32

The crowds got even bigger and he addressed them, 'This is an evil generation; it is asking for a sign. The only sign it will be given is the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be a sign to this generation. On Judgement Day the Queen of the South will stand up against the people of this generation and be their condemnation, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, look, there is something greater than Solomon here. On Judgement Day the men of Nineveh will appear against this generation and be its condemnation, because when Jonah preached they repented; and, look, there is something greater than Jonah here.

As much as the Lord is happy to grant our requests when they are part of His plan of salvation- He is not, however, prepared to simply perform miracles and signs when these are called for and spring from an evil heart. We know the Lord's rejection that the devil receives when he tries three times in the desert for Jesus to do signs and wonders (*cf. Mt 4:3-7*). His motivation was evil.

True petitions to the Lord are devoid of any magical imagination, even if they can be addressed to him most intensively and urgently. God acts in love and truth, and everything that is brought to him needs the touch of love and truth.

Today we learn about the judgment of God. We are familiar with those passages that admonish us to works of mercy, because everything we do to the least of these we do to Jesus (*cf. Mt 25:40*). Thus the Lord has shown us a clear way how we can stand in the judgment.

In today's text we get to know another aspect that corresponds with the other statements about the judgment and is repeatedly brought to our attention in various passages of Scripture:

It is the responsibility for faith. “*When someone is given a great deal, a great deal will be demanded of that person*” (*Lk 12:48*). The coming of Jesus, and with it the grace of God, is much more important than anything that has happened before. In

all the prophets before, there was God's presence; they were a voice of God and people were held accountable, whether they listened to the prophets or not.

In the Son, however, the Word, God Himself, comes to us as man (*cf. Jn 1:14*).

Thus the grace is greater and the light that now shines in the world.

It is an aspect of judgment that those who have received less grace testify against those who have received a greater light.

We can understand this well if we consider, for example, what riches are present in the Catholic Church and how in proportion to this, less of the knowledge of God is present in many Protestants! And yet it is not rare for us to be shamed by the faith and zeal of Protestants, or by representatives of other religions. In a certain sense a kind of judgment is already taking place - albeit in secret - and it can serve as an incentive for us to live our own faith fully!

It is surely a true petition to the Lord if we implore Him to discover even more deeply the good entrusted to us and to bear authentic witness to the faith. Hardly could the Lord care more than to fulfil these requests.

After all, we only have a short span of life and St Paul exhorts us to make use of it (*cf. Eph 5:15-16*)! The biblical example should awaken us to take the admonitions to the people of Israel seriously and to reflect well on our own responsibility!

Exhortations always have the character of reminding us of the seriousness of a situation, in order to activate all forces for the right decisions. This is not to be confused with a fear of God, but it is a warning voice from within and without not to miss the time of grace!