

16. July 2024

## The truth compromises

Mt 11:20-24

*Jesus began to reproach the towns in which most of his miracles had been worked, because they refused to repent. 'Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Still, I tell you that it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on Judgement Day than for you. And as for you, Capernaum, did you want to be raised as high as heaven? You shall be flung down to hell. For if the miracles done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have been standing yet. Still, I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on Judgement Day than for you.'*

Today the Lord speaks very clearly about how decisive the encounter with Him is. We must not forget that we as human beings are committed to the truth. Consciously closing ourselves off from the truth has tremendous and far-reaching consequences, as Jesus clearly shows us in today's Gospel. Judgement will also be about how we have responded to the truth that has been revealed to us, what we have done with what has been entrusted to us. In Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum the Lord had worked great miracles, which should have brought people to conversion. But this did not happen! That is why Jesus reproaches them.

Some people may find it very difficult to understand how conversion, on the one hand, should be freely given, while, on the other hand, it is a serious obligation. This is because we are creatures, not autonomous, self-created beings. All the foundations of our life have been given to us, they are, so to speak, pre-established; and it will always be a contradiction if we do not live according to the deepest meaning of our existence or, worse, if we do the opposite of what we were created for.

To follow the truth and to order our lives according to it is both a calling and an inner obligation. If we do not do so, we will be living in an inner contradiction.

Jesus, being the Son of God, not only announces the truth to us; He says of Himself that He is the Truth (cf. Jn 14:6). From these words we can understand today's Gospel: In the encounter with Jesus our life is decided in the whole dimension of His existence. This shows us the great seriousness of our service of evangelisation and commits us to make our personal life as consistent as possible with the truth we proclaim. For how will people believe if we speak one way and act another?

Only the Lord knows whether a person had sufficient knowledge of the truth of the gospel to make the decision to follow it, and only He knows what might have been the impediments to his not responding to the gospel invitation. We cannot and should not judge about this!

But the words of today's gospel exhort us again and again to be aware of the enormous grace we have received from God by being able to know the gospel.