



1) Opening Prayer

Almighty God,
our hope and our strength,
without you we falter.
Help us to follow Christ
and to live according to your will.
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

2) Gospel Reading - Matthew 6,19-23

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and woodworm destroy them and thieves can break in and steal. But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor woodworm destroys them and thieves cannot break in and steal. For wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too.

'The lamp of the body is the eye. It follows that if your eye is clear, your whole body will be filled with light. But if your eye is diseased, your whole body will be darkness. If then, the light inside you is darkened, what darkness that will be!'

3) Reflection

- In today's Gospel we continue our reflection on the Sermon on the Mountain. Two days ago and yesterday we have reflected on the practice of the three works of piety: alms giving (Mt 6, 1-4), prayer (Mt 6, 5-15) and fasting (Mt 6, 16-18). Today's and tomorrow's Gospel presents four recommendations on the relationship with material goods, explaining clearly how to live the poverty of the first Beatitude: (a) not to accumulate (Mt 6, 19-21); (b) to have a correct idea of material goods (Mt 6,22-23); (c) not serve two masters (Mt 6,24); (d) to abandon oneself to Divine Providence (Mt 6,25-34). Today's Gospel presents the first two recommendations: not to accumulate goods 19-21) and not to look at the world with diseased eyes (6, 22-23).

- Matthew 6, 19-21: Do not accumulate treasures on earth. If, for example today on TV it is announced that next month sugar and coffee will be lacking in the market, we all will buy the maximum possible of coffee and sugar. We accumulate because we lack trust.

During the forty years in the desert, the people were tested to see if they were capable to observe God's Law (Ex 16, 4). The test consisted in this: to see if they were capable to gather only the necessary manna for a single day, and not accumulate for the following day. Jesus says: "Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and woodworm destroy them and thieves can break in and steal. But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor woodworm destroys them and thieves cannot break in and steal. What does it mean to store up treasures in heaven? It is a question of knowing where I place the basis of my existence. If I place it on material goods of this earth, I always run the danger of losing what I have stored up. If I place the basis on God, nobody will be able to destroy it and I will have interior freedom to share with others what I possess. In order that this may be possible and feasible it is important to reach a community life together which will favour sharing and reciprocal help, and in which the greatest richness or the treasure is not material riches, but rather the richness or the treasure of fraternal living together born from the certainty brought by Jesus: God is Father and Mother of all. Because there where your treasure is, there is your heart.

- Matthew 6, 22-23: The light of your body is the eye. To understand what Jesus asks it is necessary to have new eyes. Jesus is demanding and asks very much; do not store up (6, 19-21), do not serve God and money together (6, 24), do not worry about what you are to eat or drink (6, 25-34). These demanding recommendations have something to do with that part of human life where persons are more anguished and worried. It also forms part of the Sermon on the Mountain, that it is more difficult to understand and to practice. And this is why Jesus says: "If your eye is diseased ...". Some translate this as diseased eye and healthy eye. Others translate as mean or poor eye and generous eye. It is the same, in reality, the worse sickness that one can imagine is a person closed up in herself and in her goods and who trusts only these. It is the sickness of being stingy! Anyone who looks at life with this eye lives in sadness and in darkness. The medicine to cure this sickness is conversion, the change of mentality and of ideology. To place the basis of life on God and in this way our look becomes generous and the whole life becomes luminous, because it makes sharing and fraternity emerge.

- Jesus wants a radical change. He wants the observance of the Law of the sabbatical year, where it is said that in the community of believers there cannot be poor (Dt 15,4). Human living together should be organized in such a way that a person should not have to worry about food and drink, about dress and house, about health and education (Mt 6, 25-34). But this is possible if we all seek the Kingdom of God and his justice first (Mt 6, 33). The Kingdom of God means to permit God to reign: it is to imitate God (Mt 5, 48). The imitation of God leads to a just sharing of goods and of creative love, which brings about a true fraternity. Divine Providence should be mediated by the fraternal organization. It is only in this way that it will be possible to eliminate any worry or concern for tomorrow (Mt 6, 34).

4) Personal Questions

- Jesus says: "There where your treasure is, your heart is also". Where is my richness found: in money or in fraternity?

- Which is the light which I have in my eyes to look at life, at events?

5) Concluding Prayer

For Yahweh has chosen Zion,
he has desired it as a home.

'Here shall I rest for evermore,
here shall I make my home as I have wished. (Ps 132,13-14)