



1) Opening prayer

Father,
you show your almighty power
in your mercy and forgiveness.
Continue to fill us with your gifts of love.
Help us to hurry towards the eternal life your promise
and come to share in the joys of your kingdom.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

2) Gospel Reading - Luke 10,13-16

Jesus said: 'Alas for you, Corazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. And still, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the Judgement than for you. And as for you, Capernaum, did you want to be raised high as heaven? You shall be flung down to hell.

'Anyone who listens to you listens to me; anyone who rejects you rejects me, and those who reject me reject the one who sent me.'

3) Reflection

? The Gospel today continues speaking about the sending out of the seventy-two disciples (Lk 10,1-12). At the end, after sending them out, Jesus speaks about shaking off the dust from the shoes, if the missionaries are not welcomed or accepted (Lk 10,10-12). Today's Gospel stressed and extends the threats upon those who refuse to receive the Good News.

? Luke 10, 13-14: Alas for you, Corazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! The place which Jesus travelled or covered in the three years of his missionary life was small. It measured only a few square kilometres along the Sea of Galilee around the cities of Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Corazin. Precisely in this very small space Jesus works the majority of his miracles and presents his discourses. He has come to save the whole of humanity, and he hardly went out of the limited space of his land. But, tragically, Jesus had to see that the people of those cities do not want to accept the message of the Kingdom and are not converted. The cities fixed themselves in the rigidity of their beliefs, traditions and customs and they do not accept the invitation of Jesus to change life. Alas for you, Corazin; Alas for you Bethsaida! For if the miracle done in you had been done in Tyre

and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes". Jesus compares the two cities with Tyre and Sidon which in the past were unyielding enemies of Israel, ill-treating the people of God. For this reason they were cursed by the Prophets: (Is 23, 1; Jr 25, 22; 47, 4; Ez 26, 3; 27, 2; 28, 2; Jl 4, 4; Am 1, 10). And now Jesus says that these same cities, symbols of all the evil done to the people in the past, would have already converted if so many miracles would have been worked in them as in Corazin and in Bethsaida.

? Luke 10, 15: And you Capernaum. "Did you want to be raised high as Heaven? You shall be flung down to hell. Jesus recalls the condemnation which Isaiah, the Prophet launched against Babylonia. Proud and arrogant, Babylonia thought: "I shall scale the heavens; higher than the stars of God I shall set my throne. I shall sit on the Mount of the Assembly far away to the north. I shall climb high above the clouds, I shall rival the Most High" (Is 14, 13-14). That is what it thought! But it completely deceived itself! The contrary happened. The Prophet says: "Now you have been flung down to Sheol, into the depths of the abyss!" (Is 14, 15). Jesus compares Capernaum with that terrible Babylonia which destroyed the monarchy and the temple and took the people as slaves, from which it never succeeded to recover. Like Babylonia, Capernaum thought it was something important, but it fell into the most profound hell. The Gospel of Matthew compares Capernaum with the city of Sodom, the symbol of the worse perversion, which was destroyed by God's anger (Gen 18, 16 to 19, 29). Sodom would have converted if it had seen the miracles which Jesus worked in Capernaum (Mt 11, 23-24). Today, the same paradox continues to exist. Many of us, Catholics since we were children, have such consolidated convictions that nobody is capable to convert us. And in some places, Christianity, instead of being a source of change and of conversion, has become the refuge of the most reactionary forces of politics of the country.

? Luke 10, 16: "Anyone who listens to you listens to me; anyone who rejects you rejects me. And those who reject me reject the one who has sent me". This phrase places the accent on the identification of the disciples with Jesus, in so far as he is despised by the authority. In Matthew the same phrase of Jesus, placed in another context, underlines the identification of the disciples with Jesus accepted by the people (Mt 10, 40). In both cases, the disciples identify themselves with Jesus in the total gift and in this gift is realized their encounter with God, and God allows himself to be found by those who seek him.

4) Personal questions

? Does my city and my country deserve the warning of Jesus against Capernaum, Corazin and Bethsaida?

? How do I identify myself with Jesus?

5) Concluding prayer

Protect me, O God, in you is my refuge.

To Yahweh I say,

'You are my Lord, my happiness is in none.'

My birthright, my cup is Yahweh;
you, you alone, hold my lot secure. (Ps 16,1-2,5)