

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Dec 4th 2017

Monday 4th: First Reading: Is 2:1-5,
122:1-2,3-4,4-5,6-7,8-9

Responsorial Psalm: Ps
Gospel Reading: Matthew 8:5-11

Jesus admires the faith of the centurion. He says that he has never seen such faith in Israel before. The centurion hasn't the faith of Israel, that of Abraham, Moses, the Prophets. He only believes in Jesus' power. He knows that Jesus doesn't even need to be present, that he isn't conditioned by anything. For Jesus, it is as simple as when he himself commands his subordinates. And Jesus doesn't resist in the face of such a faith. It is a faith that surpasses the faith of Israel; in some ways it questions Israel's faith. Israel has the promises, the experience of centuries, the covenant, a deep understanding of God, but is not yet aware of Jesus' word power in every situation.

When we look at today's first lesson we see one of the most impressive examples of the words of the prophets: all wars will disappear, peace will reign overall, "men will melt swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore". The prophecy begins with the words: "In those future days". When we contemplate the world in which we live we have to realise that those times have to be a period far away in the future, that the world in which we live is becoming significantly more violent. Today's wars cause incomparably more victims than the old ones. Can we believe that Isaiah's prophecy will be accomplished one day? Can we expect that Jesus's word will heal all the diseases, even the big scourges of our time? Isaiah's prophecy is not only an announcement, it is properly a challenge for us.

Aren't we bearers of Christ's word? Do we really believe that Jesus's word can heal our damages, our sense of impotence, our negativism, our paralysis?

We have even the power, with Jesus's word, to stop enmities, stop raising arms against one another. We have the power to "beat swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks"; it depends on us being able to remake that language of mistrust into that of welcome and peace. In our closest relationships, we are surely able to be instruments of understanding and friendship, but even so, in public relations our voice can build a more just and fraternal world.

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