

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Dec 7th 2017

Thurs. 7th First Reading: Is 26:1–6, Responsorial Psalm: Ps 118:1 and 8–9, 19–21, 25–27a Gospel Reading: Matthew 7:21, 24–27

To enter into the Kingdom of Heavens; this is what everyone desires, to reach happiness in full. As in Jesus's time, we represent "salvation" or "Heaven" as a close space that one enters therein through a door. Jesus uses this image to say that the access into eternal life doesn't depend upon what we say, or even what we think, nor the image we have of ourselves, but only upon listening to his words and putting them into practice. The contrary would be to build our house on the sand. Our life needs to support all kinds of adversities: winds, lightnings, floods beat on our house. There are some dramatic events that are capable of destabilizing even a person thought to be strong and self-confident. A death in the family, the breaking of a relationship, a big deception. At once our faith, that had been always calm, is shaken. Our faith was just able to resist the normal changes, but suddenly even our relationship with God seems unable to cope with such a beating. Then appears that which is our life's true base.

The lesson on Isaiah we heard today speaks about the fortresses of Jerusalem, God's city: "We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks". A city needs a good wall to defend itself from outside. On one occasion Jerusalem had endured for three years, the siege of the world's most powerful army at that time, and didn't fall into the foe's hands. But Isaiah says that the strength and endurance of the city and the Temple are not in their stones but in people's faithfulness: "Open the gates, that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in".

Jesus says that our strength doesn't lay in our self-confidence or the words that we pronounce, but on his words, when they are those that sustain and inspire our relationship with God, the neighbor. Winds and convulsions make us bear in mind that when we experience human weakness is when we can also experience the true strength of his word, that is, God's grace.

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