

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, May 23rd 2024

Lest you should land in Gehenna!

In our communities, we often serve our brothers and sisters, carrying out the tasks with diligence and generosity. However, jealousy and envy often ruin our efforts. And all the work we do ceases to be a service but turns out to be a means of affirming ourselves, our social status and our ego.

St. Mark urges his community to strive to make their lives beneficial to the community. God has endowed us with eyes, hands, and legs to perceive and assist the needs of our brothers and sisters for their welfare. Those who squander their opportunity to do good in this world forfeit, forever, the unique chance that God has presented them; they degrade themselves like garbage. In the city of Jerusalem, there was an area named "Gehenna" where all the waste and garbage were dumped to be burned. The fire was never put out and any leftover waste would be infested with worms.

The Gospel mentions the idea of mutilating hands, legs, or eyes if we use them to do wrong things or fail to use them to do good. This is indeed shocking, but it's important to remember that it's a call to action to cut off our negative behaviours, attitudes, lifestyles, and ideologies, so that we won't let our lives be wasted in the garbage bin.

Let us ask, then: what is it in me that is contrary to the Gospel? What, in concrete terms, does Jesus want me to cut out of my life?