



The Holy See

CLOSING OF THE JUBILEE FOR THE 800th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE CONFIRMATION OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

*Basilica of Saint John Lateran
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[Multimedia]

The Word of God today offers us two opposing human scenarios: on the one hand the ‘carnival’ of worldly curiosity, and on the other the glorification of the Father through good works. Our life always moves between these two scenarios. Indeed, they are of every age, as shown by the words Saint Paul addressed to Timothy (cf. 2 Tim 4:1-5). Saint Dominic with his first brothers, 800 years ago, moved between these two scenarios.

Paul advises Timothy that he will have to proclaim the Gospel in a context where the people always seek new “teachers”, “myths”, different doctrines, ideologies.... “Having itching ears” (2 Tim 4:3). It is the ‘carnival’ of worldly curiosity, of seduction. For this reason the Apostle instructs his disciple also by using powerful verbs: such as “be urgent”, “convince”, “rebuke”, “exhort”, and then “be steady”, “endure suffering” (vv. 2, 5).

It is interesting to see that already then, 2,000 years ago, the Apostles of the Gospel faced this scenario, that up to our days it has really evolved and globalized due to the seduction of subjective relativism. The tendency of human beings to seek their own newness finds the ideal environment in the society of appearances, in consumption, in which old things are often recycled, but the important thing is to make them seem new, attractive, captivating. Even the truth is disguised. We move within the so-called ‘liquid society’, without fixed points, demolished, lacking sound and steady references; in the ephemeral culture of the disposable.

In the face of this worldly ‘carnival’ the opposite scenario clearly stands out. We find it in the words of Jesus which we just heard: “give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Mt 5:16). How does

this passage happen, from pseudo-celebratory superficiality to glorification, which is true celebration? It happens thanks to the good works of those who, becoming disciples of Jesus, became 'salt' and 'light'. "Let your light so shine before men" — Jesus says — "that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5:16).

In the midst of the 'carnival' of yesterday and today, this is the response of Jesus and of the Church; this is the sound support in the midst of the 'liquid' environment: the good works that we are able to do thanks to Christ and to his Holy Spirit, and which make grow in our heart thanksgiving to God the Father, praise, or at least wonder and the question: 'why?', 'why does that person behave in this way?'. That is the restlessness of the world before the testimony of the Gospel.

But for this 'shaking up' to happen, salt must not lose its taste and light must not be hidden (cf. Mt 5:13-15). Jesus says it very clearly: if salt loses its taste it is no longer good for anything. Woe to salt that loses its taste! Woe to a Church that loses its taste! Woe to a priest, a consecrated person, a congregation that loses its taste!

Today we give glory to the Father for the work that Saint Dominic, full of the light and salt of Christ, carried out 800 years ago: a work in service to the Gospel, preached with his words and with his life; a work that, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, allowed many men and women to be helped so as not to be lost in the midst of the 'carnival' of worldly curiosity, but rather to have tasted the flavour of healthy doctrine, the taste of the Gospel, and to have become, in their turn, light and salt, artisans of good works ... and true brothers and sisters who glorify God and teach others to glorify God with the good works of life.