

Closing Mass: Tuesday, July 12, 2022

Mt 11, 20-24

In today's gospel, Jesus laments that in spite of several miracles he had done, the towns of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum did not believe. These three cities were fortunate enough to see for themselves the missionary activities of Jesus. But, sadly, they did not repent.

How does this gospel apply to us as we come to the end of our wonderful Continental Assembly?

Instead of doing a homely, I want to share with you, in the light of this gospel, my personal meditation as we conclude, with this mass, our wonderful Continental Assembly. This Assembly has been personally for me **an occasion for appreciation, an invitation for conversion and a call to action.**

By praying this morning with this gospel, I was trying carefully to catch the accent in Jesus' voice as he said this. "Alas for you Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!" The Greek word for woe or Alas expresses sorrowful pity. It is the accent of sorrow, the accent of one who offered men the most precious thing in the world and saw it disregarded. What was the sin of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum which was worse than the sin of Tyre, Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah?

It was the sin of the people who failed to appreciate their privilege. To the cities of Galilee had been given a great privilege which had never come to Tyre and Sidon, or to Sodom and Gomorrah, because the cities of Galilee had actually seen and heard Jesus. We cannot condemn a man who never had the chance to know any better; but if a man who has had every chance to know the right does the wrong, then he does stand condemned.

With the sharings of this Continental Assembly, I have come to appreciate much more the privilege to be a Montfortian. Thus, our time together has been for me:

An occasion for appreciation. This ten-day of study, sharings, celebrating together have helped me rediscover how our montfortian identity is unique, how our spirituality is rich, how our mission is beautiful, how our apostolate with lay associates is exciting. Wowww! What a privilege to be a Montfortian!

Being together for 10 days, having the chance to meet in- person all you who have done so much for our congregation and for God's holy people in your challenging ministries have helped me appreciate much more the beauty, the vitality, and the diversity of our Congregation. It is a privilege to have lived this experience! But the greater our privileges have been, the greater is our condemnation if we fail to shoulder the responsibilities and accept the obligations which these privileges bring with them. This Continental Assembly has been also for me:

An invitation for conversion. Jesus warns us that those who have received the good news of salvation and yet do not repent for their sins will receive greater punishment than those who have not. He is pointing out the ingratitude of people who could know him but who refuse to change. It is an invitation to conversion. During these ten days, we were able ~~to~~ return to our roots which are the writings and the life of Father de Montfort. As if I heard Montfort telling me: *Come back, Wismick, Jesus is calling you, (Hymn 98, 9-10)*. The challenge of ongoing conversion is the first priority among the six challenges of our 2017 General Chapter. Having the chance to revisit some Montfort writing during this Continental Assembly challenges me to welcome the gift of conversion which is an ongoing process.

Finally, most importantly, this Continental assembly is for me:

A call for action. There are sins of action; but there is also a sin of inaction. The sin of Chorazin, of Bethsaida, and of Capernaum was the sin of doing nothing. Chorazin and Bethsaida saw Jesus perform miracles and heard his teachings, and yet, they ignored Him. Capernaum, where Jesus lived and was the base for his ministry. All these three places witnessed the great deeds of Jesus. Therefore, they should have done better. It is said that with great privilege comes great responsibility. With the great privilege of knowing Jesus and his saving power, comes great responsibility. Those three Galilean towns had good reasons to believe in Jesus that most others had never have. They had been blessed with the visitation of God. They heard the good news and experienced the wonderful works which Jesus did for them, and they have done nothing.

What about you Wismick? To you much has been given, therefore much will be required. What have you done? The time for action is NOW. As we end this assembly, our mission begins and continues.