

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

“In today’s gospel Christ heals in a spectacular way and when His disciples asked why they themselves could not accomplish such a dramatic cure, Jesus tells them a plain straight-forward fact - *“for this healing more than words are necessary and prayer and fasting are the only answers!”*”

You remember the frosty old priest depicted in Georges Bernanos’ book where he is advising the new young curate - *“Our Lord told us to be the salt of the earth - not the honey!”* He was advising a stronger spirituality as indeed our Lord seems to be advising in today’s gospel.

There is a strong move to secularize the Church now, to make it more useful. Wheel off the altar and bring on the aerobics classes - bonding with one another is a good Christian thing, don’t you think? A better expression of what Jesus taught, yes??

No. It’s honey. It’s sweet. It attracts but it doesn’t strengthen, cleanse or preserve. It implies that Christ’s life was not important, His birth, His baptism, His miracles, suffering, death, resurrection are not really important - what matters is His teaching, and that teaching is love.

I am not for one moment belittling Christian love - *“by this will all men know that you are my disciples”* - what I’m saying is that Christ in today’s gospel is definitely pointing to more - more effort on our part! More salt in our spiritual diet and less honey.

It would be a good thing in response to today’s reading of the Gospel to pick up the change in our Lord’s reply to His disciples. Most of us have been practising Christians for many years but when was the last time we entered upon a special period of prayer and fasting? Have we become weak and feeble spiritually?

When He advocated fasting Jesus was not prescribing something new but rather endorsing what was already understood in Judaism. Too often we see Christ as a starting point rather than a fulfilment; a mistake as Christ without Judaism would be incomplete!

So let us reflect on the forceful words in today’s gospel and ask ourselves if we are making use of all the spiritual tools at our disposal.”

Amen.

Fr. John

We next meet here, at St. Andrew’s on Saturday, August 14th at 5:30pm for the Vigil and on Sunday, August 15th at 10:30am for the Liturgy.

Panikhida for Metropolitan Anthony will be served by Fr. John on August 4th, at 10:30am, at Brompton Cemetery.

Do stay for the previously announced parish meeting which will take place today.