

16. January 2020

“To believe, to listen, to do the will of God”

Mk 1, 40- 45

A man suffering from a virulent skin-disease came to him and pleaded on his knees saying, 'If you are willing, you can cleanse me.' Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said to him, 'I am willing. Be cleansed.' And at once the skin-disease left him and he was cleansed. And at once Jesus sternly sent him away and said to him, 'Mind you tell no one anything, but go and show yourself to the priest, and make the offering for your cleansing prescribed by Moses as evidence to them.' The man went away, but then started freely proclaiming and telling the story everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, but stayed outside in deserted places. Even so, people from all around kept coming to him.

The faith of the leper releases, as it were, the Lord's compassion and desire to save... This is a truth that we should deeply impress upon ourselves. The Lord wants to heal, the Lord wants to save, the Lord wants to call every person into the kingdom of the Father, the Lord wants everyone to be delivered from his leprosy, be it physical or mental. *"I am willing"* he says to the leper, *"Be cleansed."*

So it is up to us to win enough faith. Again and again the Lord draws our attention to this! So many passages in the Scriptures speak of it, that we should ask ourselves: How can our faith grow, how can it become so great that the Lord can do whatever He wants?

One thing is to pray persistently that our faith may increase, as did the disciples who asked the Lord to strengthen their faith (*Lk 17,5*). Another is to realize in meditation what the Lord has already done for us, because this can strengthen our faith! How often has the Lord intervened, how often have our prayers been answered, what dangers has He saved us from, how faithfully has He led us through serious crises...

An important point to grow in faith is gratitude. It is not enough just to remember what the Lord has done for us, even though this is already very important and is often enough forgotten! It is only in thanksgiving for what has been received that we realize the reality in all its dimension. In this context, that passage of the

Gospel comes to mind, when only one of the ten lepers that the Lord had healed, returns to give glory to God (*cf. Lk 17,11-19*).

Every experience with God is suitable to deepen our faith if we apply it correctly, because each one shows us how much God cares for us human beings and how much "I want it" from God's side surrounds us. To enter into this "I want it" in faith, means to open the doors to God, so that he can act with us and through us.

In a way, we could say that there is not only that transcendence that elevates us to God through Christ: *"Through him and with him and in him, O God, Almighty Father..."* But there is also a transcendence of God, when He manifests Himself through our faith, and can thus carry out His work.

Faith, then, is not only important for our salvation, but it is also at the service of God's action for us and for humanity. One more reason to ask for the growth of faith and to strive for it!

In today's case, however, Jesus only wanted the priest to know about God's actions so that those who watched him with suspicion would know that He was acting according to the law, so there was no reason to suspect him.

This is a very wise gesture on the part of the Lord, even if it perhaps did not achieve its intended effect. But the Lord made them an offer, so to speak: "Look, my action is in the continuity of the law."

This is also a valuable clue when dealing with other people who may not understand or even suspect our actions. Let us try to communicate it in their language, even though it may not be of much use. But if it is not heard and accepted, then the way of prayer remains!

The man who was healed did not keep to what the Lord taught him. Full of joy about his healing he told everywhere what had happened. As much as it is desirable to make the Lord's deeds known, it is better to listen to exactly what the Lord wants than to follow one's own feelings of joy! The result was that the Lord could no longer preach the Gospel everywhere, but had to hide himself.

To believe, to listen and to do His will! This triad makes our spiritual life both flexible and stable!