

14. January 2021

“To believe, to listen and 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 the Lord's will for salvation.

This is a truth that we should remember deeply. The Lord wants to heal, the Lord wants to save, the Lord wants to call every man into the Father's kingdom, the Lord wants everyone to be delivered from his leprosy, whether it be physical or mental. “*I am willing*” He says to the leper, “*Be cleansed.*”

So it is up to us whether we have enough faith. Again and again we are made aware of this by the Lord! So many passages in the Scriptures speak of this, so that we should ask ourselves: How can our faith grow, how can it become so great that the Lord can do anything He wants to do through us?

One is to pray persistently for faith, as did the disciples who asked the Lord to strengthen their faith (*cf. Lk 17:5*).

Another is to realise in meditation all that the Lord has already done for us, for this can strengthen our faith! How often has the Lord intervened, how often have our prayers been heard, what dangers has he saved us from, how faithfully has he brought us through difficult 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 very important and often enough forgotten! It is only in thanksgiving for what we have received that the whole

reality is realised and we are reminded of that passage in the Gospel which speaks of how out of ten healed lepers only one returned to give glory to the Lord (*cf. Lk 17:11-19*).

Every experience with God is capable of deepening our faith if we use it properly, because every experience shows us how much God cares for us human beings and how much his: “*I am willing*” surrounds us. To enter into this “*I am willing*” in faith is to open the doors for God to act with us and through us.

In a sense, there is not only the transcendence that we rise to God in Christ: “Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father...” But there is also a transcendence of God when He communicates Himself through our faith and performs His works!

So faith is not only important for our salvation, but it is also at the service of God's action towards us and towards people. All the more reason to ask for and strive for the growth of faith!

In today's case, however, Jesus only wanted the priest to know about God's wonderful deed. Those who were watching him with suspicion should know that the Lord was acting lawfully, so there was no real reason to suspect him.

This is a very wise gesture of the Lord, even though it may not have had its intended effect. But the Lord made them an offer, so to speak: “Look, my actions are in the continuity of the law.”

This is also a valuable hint in dealing with other people who may not understand our actions properly or may even resent them. Let us try to convey it in their language, even though it may not be of much use. But if it is not heard and received, then the path of prayer remains!

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

To believe, to listen and do his will! This triad makes our spiritual life supple and stable!