

8. February 2021

“Jesus wants to heal”

Mk 6:53-56

Having made the crossing, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored there. When they disembarked people at once recognised him, and started hurrying all through the countryside and brought the sick on stretchers to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, to village or town or farm, they laid down the sick in the open spaces, begging him to let them touch even the fringe of his cloak. And all those who touched him were saved.

We do not know whether the people who experienced these miracles of healing were then permanently converted to the Lord. But just as the sun rises on the good and the evil (*Mt 5:45*), so the Lord bestows his healing love on those who need it.

Actually, one might think, the powerful sign of a miracle is enough to convince that God is at work. As a consequence, turning to God should be self-evident. But we know from the Gospel (*cf. e.g. Jn 11:45-48*) and also from testimonies from church history that it is not so. Let us recall the radio play about St. Agnes. Despite several obvious miracles, only Claudius, who had been raised from death, was converted, while the pagan priests, in view of the miracles, even insisted on the death of St. Agnes. The example of Jesus shows it to us. All these healings and the many miracles that happened through him could have led the Pharisees and scribes to believe. But we know that unfortunately it was often different.

But God does not let this stop him from doing good to people. It is necessary to do good for the sake of good, even if the even deeper dimension, namely the awakening of faith and the concrete following of the Lord, does not happen immediately. So we pray for people and may not see a change for many decades - maybe never at all. I am thinking of those stories that are told about missionaries who preached under the most difficult circumstances and dedicated their lives to the service of the mission, but never saw the fruits of their efforts. After their death, however, it happened that all the inhabitants of an island found faith.

God always wants people to understand how much he loves them and to give them his closeness, even if they do not yet receive it.

In today's Gospel we encounter a very open attitude towards the Lord, because if one believes that even the touch of the fringe of his cloak can heal, then one can assume a strong faith of the people. And we hear: All were healed.

Always our faith in the Lord is challenged in many dimensions. Jesus can and wants to heal. But even more important than the healing of the body is the healing of the soul. When people live in a forgetfulness of God or have even entered the realm of sin, as is unfortunately increasingly the case, their soul becomes sick.

Not only is it deprived of the healing nourishment of God's presence, which strengthens and sustains it, but through sin the poison of death is infused! With this poison of death, the spirit of evil also takes hold more and more and so he gets the soul more and more under his control. She now lives deathly ill in the slave house of a tyrannical ruler. Perhaps she can hardly move.

Let us listen carefully to the fact that in today's Gospel the sick were brought to Jesus on stretchers so that they could at least touch the fringe of his cloak.

When people in such a condition, as described above, can no longer come to Jesus themselves, then we must carry these sick people to him through our prayers and not be deterred by the leprosy of sin.

If these sick people do not yet reach out to Jesus themselves, then we should pray for ways to reach them and how they can perhaps at least touch the fringe of his cloak through us.