

15. February 2023

Healing blindness

Mk 8:22-26

They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought to him a blind man whom they begged him to touch. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. Then, putting spittle on his eyes and laying his hands on him, he asked, 'Can you see anything?' The man, who was beginning to see, replied, 'I can see people; they look like trees as they walk around.' Then he laid his hands on the man's eyes again and he saw clearly; he was cured, and he could see everything plainly and distinctly. And Jesus sent him home, saying, 'Do not even go into the village.'

What a great miracle that a blind man is healed and can begin to perceive God's marvelous Creation and see people face to face! What a joy for the healed man and for all those who had brought him to Jesus! Here the Kingdom of God becomes palpable, in which He has mercy on the ailments of men.

In fact, wherever the Lord comes and finds faith in people, He can act. The New Testament relates so many healings, expulsions of demons and other miracles....

However, the miracle is even greater when the Lord opens men's eyes of faith, so that they begin to see in truth. Again and again we hear testimonies of people who, after an encounter with Jesus, begin to see things differently in His light. Perhaps it happens to some of them like the blind man in today's Gospel, who at first saw only dimly, until the Lord laid His hands on him again, and then he saw everything clearly. Here begins a new life for the person, because he begins to walk in the light of faith. If he remains faithful to the Lord, he will never again forget that it was God's grace that touched him and healed him of his blindness.

But, unfortunately, there can also be people who, even though they have received the light of faith, allow themselves to be deceived and blinded. This is why it is so important to nourish the faith with the right nutrients, to walk the path of holiness and, in an intimate dialogue with God, to deepen day by day the path of following Christ.

In the Letter to the Philippians, St. Paul laments that some have become "enemies of Christ's cross" and "their god is the stomach" (Phil 3:18-19). How can this happen?

As we heard in the reading of February 13, the Lord warned Cain that, if he did not act rightly, sin was "crouching at the door hungry to get" him (Gen 4:7). For this reason, it is always necessary to examine our actions in the light of God, without ever neglecting ourselves. We must be aware that sin is always lying in wait, waiting for the opportunity to gain access to man.

It will not always be the "great temptation" that makes a person fall, but it can be many small steps and neglect of spiritual exercises that pave the way. Then one loses the strength to resist sin. This can get even worse when one begins to become habituated to sin and even stops considering it as such. In the worst case, one can go so far as to be proud of sin, considering it as some kind of "achievement" or "feat". At this point, a kind of "terminal blindness" would have been reached. However, the blindness began much earlier, when one ceased to offer resistance to sin.

This blindness, of which one is guilty oneself, is much more difficult to cure than that of people who simply do not yet know the Lord. This latter blindness has taken hold of many people in countries that were previously marked by faith. Indeed, faith is increasingly weakening, especially the binding faith. By this term, I mean faith in its totality, without retrenchment or concessions to the spirit of the world. This calls for a distancing from the world, which we are supposed to penetrate with the leaven of the Gospel (Mt 13:33) in order to make it see. We cannot allow the reverse to happen; that is, that it is the spirit of the world that penetrates the Church and that she no longer perceives it as harmful.

What can be done, then?

We will have to act like those who brought the blind man to Jesus in today's Gospel. Let us present to the Lord the blindness of this world, and especially that which has penetrated the Church, and ask Him to touch it. Even if the Lord already knows about it, let us tell Him that it is a particularly serious blindness, and let us beseech Him with great faith to heal the people affected, if they want it and allow Him to act.

A special grace is needed, which only God can give.