

Monday 4th of Lent

Gospel text (Jn 4,43-54): Jesus left for Galilee. Jesus himself said that no prophet is recognized in his own country. Yet the Galileans welcomed him when He arrived, because of all the things He had done in Jerusalem during the Festival and which they had seen. For they, too, had gone to the feast. Jesus went back to Cana of Galilee where He had changed the water into wine.

At Ca-per-naum there was an official whose son was ill, and when he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and asked him to come and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Jesus said, «Unless you see signs and won-ders, you will not believe!». The official said, «Sir, come down before my child dies». And Jesus replied, «Go, your son is living».

The man had faith in the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way. He was already going down the hilly road when his servants met him with this news, «Your son has recovered!». So he asked them at what hour the child had begun to recover and they said to him, «The fever left him yesterday in the afternoon about one o'clock». And the father realized that it was the time when Jesus told him, «Your son is living». And he became a believer, he and all his family. Jesus performed this second miraculous sign when he returned from Judea to Galilee.

«That Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee»

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Today, we find Jesus again in Cana of Galilee, where He had previously made the well known miracle of changing the water into wine. Now, on this occasion, He performs a new miracle: the recovery of a royal official's son. In spite of how spectacular the first one was, this second miracle is, undoubtedly, more valuable, for what Jesus solves with this miracle is nothing material, but a problem of a human life.

What is so remarkable in this case is that Jesus does not go to Capernaum to directly heal there the sick one; He performs the miracle without moving from Cana: «The official told him: ‘Sir, come down before my child dies!’. And Jesus replied: ‘Go, your son is living’» (Jn 4:49-50).

This should remind us all that we can do a lot of good from a distance, that is, without having to make us present wherever our generosity is requested. We can, thus, help the Third World simply by collaborating economically with our Missions or with catholic organizations that may be working over there. Or let us help those in need on the marginal suburbs of the big cities with our contributions to institutions like Caritas International, without our having to set foot there. Or, we can even make a lot of people far away happy by means of just a telephone call, a letter or an e-mail.

Quite often we do not perform a good deed by excusing ourselves because of our impossibility to be physically present wherever there is an urgent need for outside help. Jesus did not use that excuse. He was not at Capernaum, but He simply performed the miracle.

If you want to be generous, distance should be no problem, for our generosity comes all the way directly from our heart and it crosses all frontiers. As Saint Augustine said: «He who is charitable at heart, always finds something to give».