

Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent

Gospel text (Jn 4:43-54): At that time Jesus left Samaria for Galilee. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his native place. When he came into Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, since they had seen all he had done in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves had gone to the feast.

Then he returned to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. Now there was a royal official whose son was ill in Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, who was near death. Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe.” The royal official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” Jesus said to him, “You may go; your son will live.” The man believed what Jesus said to him and left. While he was on his way back, his slaves met him and told him that his boy would live. He asked them when he began to recover. They told him, “The fever left him yesterday, about one in the afternoon.” The father realized that just at that time Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live,” and he and his whole household came to believe. [Now] this was the second sign Jesus did when he came to Galilee from Judea.

“Jesus left Samaria for 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 royal official said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” Jesus said to him, “You may go; your son will live.” The man believed what Jesus said to him and left” (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.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“In the case of the centurion faith had been perfected, and therefore He undertook to go, that we might learn the rightmindedness of the man; but here the nobleman's faith was imperfect and he knew not yet clearly that even when absent He could heal. He shows that this man might gain

faith from Jesus not going.” (Saint John Chrysostom)

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“Do you think that God will not listen to us if we pray to him with insistence? He is always listening and he knows everything about us lovingly. We battle with him beside us, and our weapon is prayer which makes us feel his presence beside us.” (Francis)

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“The Gospels were written by men who were among the first to have the faith and wanted to share it with others. Having known in faith who Jesus is, they could see and make others see the traces of his mystery in all his earthly life (...). His deeds, miracles and words all revealed that ‘in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily’ (Col 2:9) (...) What was visible in his earthly life leads to the invisible mystery of his divine sonship and redemptive mission.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 515)