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 performed the famous miracle of turning water into wine. Now, on this occasion, he performs a new miracle: the healing of the son of a royal official. Although the first was spectacular, this one is undoubtedly more valuable, because it is not something material that is resolved with the miracle, but rather the life of a person.

What is striking about this new miracle is that Jesus acts from a distance; he does not go to Capernaum to cure the sick man directly, but without leaving Cana he makes the recovery possible: “The royal official said to him, ‘Sir, come down before my child dies.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You may go; your son will live.’” (Jn 4:49,50).

This reminds all of us that we can do a lot of good from a distance, that is, without having to be present in the place where our generosity is requested. For example, we help the Third World by collaborating financially with our missionaries or with Catholic organizations that are working there. We help the poor in marginalized neighborhoods of large cities with our contributions to institutions such as Caritas, without having to set foot on their streets. Or we can even bring joy to many people who are very far away from us with a phone call, a letter or an email.

We often excuse ourselves from doing good because we do not have the possibility of being physically present in places where there is urgent need. Jesus did not excuse himself because he was not in Capernaum, but rather he worked the miracle.

Distance is not a problem when it comes to being generous, because generosity comes from the heart and crosses all borders. As Saint Augustine would say: “Whoever has charity in his heart, always finds something to give.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “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)

- “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)

- “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, Nº 515)