Friday of the Twelfth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 8:1-4): When Jesus came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And then a leper approached, did him homage, and said, “Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean.” He stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, “I will do it. Be made clean.” His leprosy was cleansed immediately. Then Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one, but go show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them.”

“Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean”

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Today, the Gospel shows us a leper, full of pain and aware of his illness, who approaches Jesus and asks him: “Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean” (Mt 8:2). We too, seeing the Lord so near and our minds, hearts, and hands so far removed from his plan of salvation, should feel eager and capable of uttering the same words as the leper: “Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean” (Mt 8:2).

Now, a question arises: Can a society that lacks awareness of sin ask the Lord for forgiveness? Can it ask him for any purification? We all know many people who suffer and whose hearts are wounded, but their tragedy is that they are not always aware of their personal situation. Despite everything, Jesus continues to be with us, day after day (cf. Mt 28:20), and awaits the same request: “Lord, if you wish…” (cf. Mt 8:2). Nevertheless, we too must cooperate. Saint Augustine reminds us of this in his classic saying: “God who created you without you, will not save you without you.” It is necessary, therefore, that we be able to ask the Lord for help, that we should desire to change with His help.

Someone might ask: Why is it so important to realize our sins, to be converted, and to desire change? Simply because, otherwise, we would still be unable to give an affirmative answer to the previous question, in which we stated that a society without awareness of sin will hardly feel the desire or need to seek the Lord to request His help.

That is why, when the time comes for repentance, the time for sacramental confession, we must rid ourselves of the past, of the scourges that infect our body and soul. Have no doubt: asking for forgiveness is a great moment in Christian initiation, because it is the moment when the scales fall from our eyes. But what if someone realizes their situation and doesn’t want to convert? As the saying goes: “There are none so blind as those who will not see.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “By this leper the Lord trains us to be clear of pride and vainglory, to be thankful and grateful.” (Saint John Chrysostom)

- “Jesus, takes from us our diseased humanity and we take from Him his sound and healing humanity. This happens each time we receive a Sacrament with faith, especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which heals us from the leprosy of sin.” (Francis)

- “The title ‘Lord’ indicates divine sovereignty. To confess or invoke Jesus as Lord is to believe in his divinity. ‘No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit'" (I Cor 12:3).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 455)