

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 presents us with a leper, full of pain and aware of his illness, who approaches Jesus and says, “Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean” (Mt 8:2). We too, seeing the Lord so near yet feeling our heads, hearts, and hands so far from His plan of salvation, should feel eager and able to utter the same plea as the leper: “Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean” (Mt 8:2).

However, a question arises: Can a society that lacks a sense of sin ask the Lord for forgiveness? Can it request any form of 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 is always with us (cf. Mt 28:20), waiting for the same request: “Lord, if you wish...” (cf. Mt 8:2). Yet, we must also cooperate. St. Augustine reminds us with his classic saying: “He who created you without you will not save you without you.” Therefore, we must be able to ask the Lord to help us and to desire change with His assistance.

Someone might ask: Why is it so important to recognize, repent, and want to change? Simply because, otherwise, we would still not be able to give an affirmative answer to the previous question, where we said that a society without a sense of sin would hardly feel the desire or need to seek the Lord to ask for His help.

Thus, when the moment of repentance arrives, the moment of sacramental confession, it is necessary to discard the past, the blemishes that infect our bodies and souls. Let us not doubt: asking for forgiveness is a significant moment of Christian initiation because it is the moment when the scales fall from our eyes. And if someone realizes their situation and does not want to convert? A popular 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)