Wednesday of the First Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 1:29-39): On leaving the synagogue he entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her. He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them.

When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons. The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him.

Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you." He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come." So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

"Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed"

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Today, we are clearly shown how Jesus split His working hours. On one hand, He prayed; on the other, He consecrated time to His mission of praying with words and deeds. Contemplation and Action. Prayer and Work. Being with God while amongst men.

We indeed see Jesus dedicated in body and soul to His task as Messiah and Savior: He cures the sick, such as Saint Peter's mother-in-law and many others; He comforts the sad ones, drives out demons and preaches. People bring Him the ailing and those with evil spirits. And they all want to hear His words. His disciples tell Him: "Everyone is looking for you" (Mk 1:37). More often than not, He maintained an exhausting schedule that did not give Him even time to breathe.

But, at the same time, Jesus also had to look for some lonely place where He could pray: "Rising very early before dawn, He left and went off to a deserted place, where He prayed" (Mk 1:35). In other Gospels

we can also find Jesus devoted to praying at different hours and even at night. He knew how to distribute His time, so that His working days would have a proper balance between work and prayer.

We often say, "I have not time!" We are so busy with our homework, our professional activity, the countless tasks on our agenda... So, quite often, we believe we should be relieved from our daily prayers. We do a lot of important things, but often run the risk of forgetting the absolutely necessary one: prayer. We have to establish a balance to be able to do the former without neglecting the latter.

Saint Francis puts it like that: “We must faithfully and devotedly work, without extinguishing the spirit of holy prayer and devotion which all temporal things must be submitted to.”

Perhaps we should organize ourselves a little bit better, discipline ourselves by “domesticating” our time. Certainly, what is important must be done. However, what is necessary, is an absolute must.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Take heed, then, often to come together to give thanks to God, and show forth His praise. For when you assemble frequently in the same place, the powers of Satan are destroyed, and the destruction at which he aims is prevented by the unity of your faith.” (Saint Ignatius of Antioch)

- “‘Beautiful love’ is learned above all by praying. Prayer brings always some kind of secluded retreat with Christ in God. The Holy Spirit only acts in such ‘secluded retreat’.” (Saint John Paul II)

- “One does not undertake contemplative prayer only when one has the time: one makes time for the Lord, with the firm determination not to give up, no matter what trials and dryness one may encounter.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 2710)