

# Thursday of the First Week in Ordinary Time

**Gospel text (Mk 1,40-45): A leper came to him [and kneeling down] begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. Then, warning him sternly, he dismissed him at once. Then he said to him, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them."**

**The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere.**

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***"If you wish, you can make me clean (...) I do will it. Be made clean."***

Fr. Xavier PAGÉS i Castañer  
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, in the first reading we read: "Therefore, as the holy Spirit says: 'Oh, that today you would hear his voice, "Harden not your hearts as at the rebellion in the day of testing in the desert..."'" (Heb 3:7-8). And we constantly repeat it in the response to Psalm 94. In this brief quote, two points are raised: a longing and a warning. Both should never be forgotten.

During our daily prayer we long for and hope to hear our Lord's voice. But, perhaps more often than not, we fill it with our own words without allowing us time to listen to what the Lord may wish to tell us. Let us, therefore, take care of our inner silence, which —by avoiding distractions and centering our attention— opens up a space to receive the affections and inspirations our Lord, most certainly, wants

to impregnate within our hearts.

A risk we must never forget is the risk that dwelling on our old sins may harden our hearts. Life's hazards, at times, may make us—even without our realizing it—more leery, insensible, disheartened, forlorn...! We must beg our Lord to make us more conscious of this inner downgrading. Our prayer offers us the opportunity to look serenely at our own life and to all circumstances surrounding it. We must meditate over the different events in the Light of the Gospel, to discover where we are in need of an authentic change.

If only we could hope for our conversion with the same degree of faith and confidence as the leper showed to Jesus! He “begged him and said, ‘If you wish, you can make me clean’” (Mk 1:40). He is the only one to make possible what for us is simply impossible. Therefore, let God act through His Grace upon us, so that our hearts can be purified, and meek to His influence may become more like Jesus' own heart, with each passing day. He is telling us, in confidence: “I do will it. Be made clean” (Mk 1:41).

## *Thoughts on Today's Gospel*

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“Especially through His lifestyle and through His actions, Jesus revealed that love is present in the world in which we live. This [merciful God’s] love makes itself particularly noticed in contact with suffering, injustice and poverty.” (Saint John Paul II)

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“We live in this world, where God is not so manifest as tangible things are, but can be sought and found only when the heart sets out and recognize that we do not live by bread alone, but first and foremost by obedience to God’s word.” (Benedict XVI)

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“Though often unconscious collaborators with God's will, they can also enter deliberately into the divine plan by their actions, their prayers and their sufferings (Cf. Col 1:24). They then fully become ‘God's fellow workers and co-workers for his kingdom’ (I Cor 3:9).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 307)