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.

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

Fr. Xavier PAGÉS i Castañer
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, during our daily prayer we long for and hope to hear our Lord's voice. «As the Holy Spirit says: Today, if you hear his voice 'do not harden your hearts'» (Heb 3:7-8). In this brief quote, two points are raised: a longing and a warning. Both should never be forgotten.

But, perhaps more often than not, we fill it with our own words without allowing us time to listen to what the Good God 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 our hearts with.

A risk we must never forget is the risk that dwelling on the old sin may harden our spiritual heart. 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 conscientious 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 change with the same degree of faith and confidence as the leper showed

when he asked Jesus!: «He came to Jesus and begged Him, 'If you so will, you can make me clean'» (Mk 1:40). He is the only one to make possible what for us is simply impossible. Let God act through His Grace upon us so our hearts can be purified and, meek to His influence, may every day become more in the image and semblance of Jesus' heart. He is telling us, in confidence: «I will; be clean» (Mk 1:41).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "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)

- "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)

- "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, № 307)