

Monday of the Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 4,16-30): When Jesus came to Nazareth where He had been brought up, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath as He usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the book of the prophet Isaiah. Jesus then unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written: «The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and new sight to the blind; to free the oppressed and announce the Lord's year of mercy».

Jesus then rolled up the scroll, gave it to the attendant and sat down, while the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then He said to them, «Today these prophetic words come true even as you listen». All agreed with him and were lost in wonder, while He kept on speaking of the grace of God. Nevertheless they asked, «Who is this but Joseph's son?». So He said, «Doubtless you will quote me the saying: Doctor, heal yourself! Do here in your town what they say you did in Capernaum». Jesus added, «No prophet is honored in his own country. Truly, I say to you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens withheld rain for three years and six months and a great famine came over the whole land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow of Zarephath, in the country of Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha, the prophet, and no one was healed except Naaman, the Syrian».

On hearing these words, the whole assembly became indignant. They rose up and brought him out of the town, to the edge of the hill on which Nazareth is built, intending to throw him down the

cliff. But he passed through their midst and went his way.

«Today these prophetic words come true even as you listen»

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Today, «these prophetic words come true even as you listen» (Lk 4:21). With these words, Jesus comments at the synagogue of Nazareth a text from the prophet Isaiah: «The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me» (Lk 4:18). These words have a meaning that goes beyond the specific historical moment when they were said. The Holy Spirit fully dwells in Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit sends him to believers.

But, in addition, the words of the Gospel are the words of both eternal and current life. They are eternal because The Eternal One has said them, and they are current because God makes them to be permanently fulfilled. When we listen to the Word of God, we have to receive it not as a human speech, but as the Word that has the power of transforming us. God does not speak to our ear but to our heart. Whatever He says is profoundly full of meaning and love. The Word of God is an inexhaustible source of life: «Who, O Lord, could possibly penetrate with his mind even one of your utterances? Just as in the case of thirsty men who drink from a fountain we leave behind more than that we can take a hold of» (St. Ephraem). His words come out of the heart of God. And, from this heart, from the Trinity's bosom, Jesus came —the Father's Word— to mankind.

This is why when, everyday, we listen to the Gospel, we must be able to say, along with the Virgin Mary: «May it be done to me according to your word» (Lk 1:38); to which God will reply: «Today these prophetic words come true even as you listen». However, for the Word to be effective in our lives, we must get rid of all our prejudices. Jesus' contemporaries did not understand it, because they were looking at him with human eyes only: «Who is this but Joseph's son?» (Lk 4:22). They could see Jesus Christ's humanity, but they could not appreciate his divinity. Whenever we listen to the Word of God, beyond its literary style, the beauty of its expressions or the singularity of the situation, we must remember it is God who is speaking to us.