Monday of the Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 4:16-30): Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, "Is this not the son of Joseph?" He said to them, "Surely you will quote me this proverb, 'Physician, cure yourself,' and say, 'Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.'" And he said, "Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But he passed through the midst of them and went away.

"Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

Fr. David AMADO i Fernández
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Today, “this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing" (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, because 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, every day, 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 this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." (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: "Is this not the son of Joseph?" (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.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “For that was the acceptable year in which Christ was crucified in our behalf, because we then were made acceptable unto God the Father, as the fruit borne by Him.” (Saint Cyril of Alexandria)
- “The good news is the precious pearl of which we read in the Gospel. It is not a thing but a mission. This is evident to anyone who has experienced the ‘delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing’” (Francis)
- “(...) The economy of salvation is at work within the framework of time, but since its fulfillment in the Passover of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the culmination of history is anticipated ‘as a foretaste,’ and the kingdom of God enters into our time.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1168)