Wednesday of the Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Lk* 4:38-44): After Jesus left the synagogue, he entered the house of Simon. Simon's mother-in-law was afflicted with a severe fever, and they interceded with him about her. He stood over her, rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up immediately and waited on them.

At sunset, all who had people sick with various diseases brought them to him. He laid his hands on each of them and cured them. And demons also came out from many, shouting, "You are the Son of God." But he rebuked them and did not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Christ.

At daybreak, Jesus left and went to a deserted place. The crowds went looking for him, and when they came to him, they tried to prevent him from leaving them. But he said to them, "To the other towns also I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent." And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

"He laid his hands on each of them and cured them"

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Today, we find ourselves faced with a clear contrast: the people seeking Jesus and the One who heals every "sickness" (beginning with Simon Peter's mother-in-law); at the same time, "demons also came out from many, shouting" (Lk 4:41). That is to say: good and peace, on the one hand; evil and despair, on the other.

This is not the first time that the devil appears "coming out," that is, fleeing from the presence of God amid shouts and exclamations. Let us also recall the Gerasene Demoniac (cf. Luke 8:26-39). It is surprising that the devil himself "recognizes" Jesus and that, as in the case of the demoniac of Gerasa, it is he himself who comes to meet Jesus (albeit, very angry and annoyed because God's presence disturbed his shameful tranquility).

So often we too think that encountering Jesus is a hindrance! It bothers us to have to go to Mass on Sunday; it worries us to think that it's been a long time since we've dedicated some time to prayer; we are ashamed of our mistakes, instead of going to the Doctor of our soul to simply ask for forgiveness... Let us consider whether it is not the Lord who must come to meet us, since we are reluctant to leave our little “cave” and go out to meet the Shepherd of our lives! This is called, simply, lukewarmness.

There is a diagnosis for this: apathy, lack of tension in the soul, anxiety, disordered curiosity, hyperactivity, spiritual laziness regarding matters of faith, faint-heartedness, a desire to be alone with oneself... And there is also an antidote: stop looking at oneself and get down to work. Make the small commitment to dedicate a little time each day to looking at and listening to Jesus (which is what prayer means): Jesus did just that, for "At daybreak, Jesus left and went to a deserted place" (Luke 4:42). Make the small commitment to overcome selfishness in one small way each day for the good of others (that's what it means to love). Make the small-big commitment to live each day in accordance with our Christian life.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “The cured woman showed great virtue, and that she had profited by her sickness: she desired only to use her health for the service of Our Lord the very instant she had recovered it.” (Saint Francis de Sales)

- “In sickness we all need human warmth: to comfort a sick person what counts more than words is serene and sincere closeness.” (Benedict XVI)

- “Illness can lead to anguish, self-absorption, sometimes even despair and revolt against God. It can also make a person more mature, helping him discern in his life what is not essential so that he can turn toward that which is. Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to him.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1501)