

Wednesday 2nd in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 3,1-6): Again Jesus entered the synagogue. A man who had a paralyzed hand was there and some people watched Jesus: Would he heal the man on the sabbath? If he did they could accuse him. Jesus said to the man with the paralyzed hand, «Stand here in the center». Then he asked them, «What does the Law allow us to do on the sabbath? To do good or to do harm? To save life or to kill?». But they were silent. Then Jesus looked around at them with anger and deep sadness because they had closed their minds. And he said to the man, «Stretch out your hand». He stretched it out and his hand was healed. But as soon as the Pharisees left, they met with Herod's supporters, looking for a way to destroy Jesus.

«What does the Law allow us to do on the sabbath? To do good or to do harm? To save life or to kill?»

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Today, Jesus tells us we must always do good: there is no such thing as a time to do good and a time to overlook our love for others. The love we get through God brings us to the supreme Law, Jesus left with us, in the new commandment: «Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another» (Jn 13:34). Jesus neither repeals nor criticizes Moses' Law, inasmuch as He is the first one to comply with its precepts and go to the synagogue on the Sabbath; what Jesus criticizes is the narrow minded version of the Law by its masters and the Pharisees, an interpretation leaving little room for mercy.

Jesus Christ has come to proclaim the Gospel of salvation, but his antagonists, far from being convinced, seek all kind of pretexts against him: «A man who had a paralyzed hand was there and some people watched Jesus: Would He heal the man on the Sabbath? If He did they could accuse him.» (Mk 3:1-2). At the same time as we witness the power of grace, we also see how hardhearted, those boastful men who though they had the truth on their side, were. Were those Pharisees joyful upon

realizing that poor man had been cured hand? Certainly not, rather on the contrary, they were even more blinded, to the point of rushing to make a deal with Herod's supporters —their natural foes— looking for a way to destroy Jesus. Some alliance!

With his action, Jesus also removes the chains with which the masters of the Law and the Pharisees had constrained the Sabbath while conferring it its true meaning: the day of communion between God and man, the day of liberation from slavery, the day of salvation from evil forces. Saint Augustin tells us: «He who has peace in the conscience, is peaceful, and this very peace is his heart's Sabbath». With Jesus Christ, the Sabbath already opens up to the gift of Sunday.