

Wednesday's Gospel: Value of Forgiveness

Gospel for Wednesday in the 6th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 8:22-26*)

And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man, and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, “Do you see anything?”

And he looked up and said, “I see men; but they look like trees, walking.”

Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and saw everything clearly.

And he sent him away to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”

Commentary

Today's Gospel passage places Jesus and his disciples in Bethsaida. This town received stern words from Jesus: “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes” (*Mt 11:21*). Bethsaida was the

home of Philip, Andrew and Peter. There Jesus worked many miracles and spoke many words about eternal life.

Christ's actions in restoring sight to the blind man is imbued with symbolism. In another place in the Gospels, Jesus heals a man blind from birth by mixing saliva with soil. This gesture recalls the passage from the book of Genesis where the creation of man is seen as the breath of God infusing life into the dust of the ground (cf. *Gn 2:7*). Jesus, by healing that man, is bringing about a new creation. The blind man not only regains his sight, but he is called by Jesus to start a new life.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus gives priority to interior miracles over exterior ones. He gives more value to forgiving sins more than to healing an illness. It is also striking how Jesus doesn't want to publicize the

miracle and tells the man, after he is healed, not to go back to the village. Our Lord doesn't want to draw attention to himself. What he wants is our personal conversion. For we too are in need of interior healing, of having our soul cleansed.

When we approach the sacrament of Confession, God heals our wounds. He cleanses our soul of sin. And then we are able to see more clearly, with a sharper focus. Saint Josemaría said: "If ever you fall, my son, go quickly to Confession and seek spiritual guidance. Show your wound! Then it can be healed properly and all possibility of infection is removed, even if doing this hurts you as much as having an operation" (*The Forge*, no. 192).

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