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Monday's Gospel: God's New Logic

Gospel for Monday in the 2nd
Week of Easter, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Jn 3:1-8*)

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him.” Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How

can a man be born when he is old?
Can he enter a second time into his
mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to
you, unless one is born of water and
the Spirit, he cannot enter the
kingdom of God. That which is born
of the flesh is flesh, and that which is
born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not
marvel that I said to you, 'You must
be born anew.' The wind blows
where it wills, and you hear the
sound of it, but you do not know
whence it comes or whither it goes;
so it is with everyone who is born of
the Spirit."

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Commentary

In today's Gospel passage, we see
Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus.
Saint John tells us that Nicodemus
was an influential Jew, from the

group of the Pharisees. This social position may explain why he went at night to look for Jesus. He didn't want to be seen by his companions, who had frequently clashed with the new Teacher from Galilee.

Nicodemus was amazed by the signs Jesus was working and wanted to know more about him, to meet him personally. He is happy to express his admiration for him, and tells him clearly "no one can do the wonders you do if God is not with him" (cf. v. 2). This man's curiosity is an opportunity for Jesus to introduce him to a new logic, the logic of the Kingdom of God, which Nicodemus finds disconcerting.

Jesus begins to talk to him about the new Kingdom he is establishing and how one enters it. We Christians, who are accustomed to the language of faith, perhaps don't find Jesus' words too shocking. But for

Nicodemus they seem shrouded in mystery. How can a man be born again when he is already old?

Jesus invites this influential Pharisee to realize that the truly decisive thing is not so much the signs he has seen but the new birth that the Holy Spirit wants to bring about in us. It is God's action that enables us to leave behind a life according to the flesh and begin to live a life according to the spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit spurs us to leave behind a life of sin, a life focused on our own selfish concerns, on our "ego," and begin a life of communion with God and our fellow men and women.

The contrast between the two mentalities can help us reflect on how we are living our daily life. The liturgy presents us anew with this well-known conversation to remind us that God acts with another logic, and that our own way of thinking

and reacting so often fails to take into account the supernatural point of view, and is much too “human.” By promising us the gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus tells us that he comes to establish a new “music” that requires docile instruments, willing to follow the Divine rhythm and begin to dance “at God’s pace.”

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