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Monday's Gospel: Jesus, Healing for Sinners

Gospel for Monday in the
Second Week of Advent, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 5:17-26*)

On one of those days, as he was teaching, there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. And behold, men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they sought to bring him in and lay him before

Jesus; but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.”

And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, “Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?”

When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, “Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins”— he said to the man who was paralyzed —“I say to you, rise, take up your bed and go home.”

And immediately he rose before them, and took up that on which he

lay, and went home, glorifying God. And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen strange things today.”

Commentary

After reading aloud, in the synagogue of Nazareth, the text from Isaiah about the redemption of captives, the healing of the blind, and the freeing of the oppressed (cf. *Is* 61:1-2), which is the true program for his own ministry, our Lord begins to perform healings.

In the Gospel for today's Mass we read these words: “and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.” Everything in Jesus is life, and he is eager to enable us to share in that fullness of life. Our Lord does not remain indifferent when he

encounters the absence of life, whether physical or spiritual. And he invites us to share in that concern.

The life Jesus radiates attracts many people seeking to be cured. Here we see a paralyzed man carried on a stretcher. But the men carrying him aren't satisfied with getting him as close as they can. They want to place that sick person right before Christ. Right before his eyes. Within reach of his hands. And they spare no effort to do so.

Their example is a call to our own heart. We are all right before God; nothing of our life remains hidden from Him. But between Him and us there is, as it were, a curtain or veil that we need to draw back. And we do so by seeking Him eagerly, finding Him and loving Him. With faith in his transforming Presence.

In the face of illness, Jesus grants the seed of health for the whole person,

opening the door to eternal life. The only thing that prevents us from entering through it is sin, which enslaves us and can even rob us of our desire for heaven.

Saint Paul tells us that at the origin of every disease of the body is the death that entered the world through Adam's sin. And this is the disease that we first need to be cured of.

For when our soul is healthy, our mortal body will be able to be transformed into a glorious one. Any physical infirmity now is temporary. And although wanting to remedy it is good, Jesus tells us that only a heart cleansed of sin is a guarantee of the fulness of life for all eternity.

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