

Wednesday's Gospel: Anger that Turns into Tenderness

Gospel for Wednesday in the 2nd Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 3:1-6*)

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. And they watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come here.” And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” But they were

silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out, and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Commentary

Only on a few occasions do the evangelists point to an angry reaction on the part of Christ. He who is all purity and holiness welcomed the sinners who approached him without any hesitation, without showing any sign of acrimony or harshness.

Nevertheless, it seems that Jesus was starting to lose patience with the Pharisees who scrutinized his every

more for any indication that he was breaking the law.

What was it about the sin of these Pharisees that provoked Jesus' anger? The Gospel says that our Lord was grieved by "their hardness of heart" It is the obstinacy of not wanting to accept explanations about the authentic meaning of the law that so deeply hurts Him. It is a blindness to the action of God's mercy, which goes beyond the limits that the Pharisees wanted to impose through excessive regulation of religious practice.

But that anger of Christ also manifested at the same time his tenderness. He suffered when he saw that the wonderful gift of divine mercy was being rejected. Therefore this reaction doesn't make the figure of Jesus any less lovable but, on the contrary, it makes him even more attractive. If Christ feels hurt by the

rejection of his gift of mercy, how much greater his joy will be if we welcome it with gratitude! It is a joy that multiplies when our Lord sees that we too learn to look at others with compassion, without placing conditions on the action of his mercy.

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