

Monday's Gospel: He Believed, and All His Family

Gospel for Monday in the 4th Week of Lent, and commentary.

Gospel (*Jn 4:43-54*)

After the two days Jesus departed to Galilee. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast, for they too had gone to the feast.

So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine.

And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

Jesus therefore said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live."

The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way. As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was living. So he asked them the hour when he began to mend, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live"; and he himself believed, and all his household.

This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

Commentary

In several places in the Gospel, our Lord asks for faith in Himself and in his words, and not only in the signs and miracles that he works. In this passage it seems that the royal official has sought Jesus primarily because he wants his son to be cured and not because of any particular interest in Jesus' teaching.

Jesus twice obtains an act of faith from the official. The first is the fact that, despite the harsh words that Jesus addresses to him as soon as he meets him – “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe” – this man does not feel rejected but insists on his request. Certainly his

response, “come down before my son dies,” is not the most convincing, but it is enough for Jesus’ heart to be moved to work the miracle.

God, in his infinite love, has made it easy for us to draw close to Him through the Son’s Sacred Humanity. Jesus is God, but he is also man. He has a human heart and understands us very well.

Jesus answers the official: “Go; your son will live.” And now the man faces a dilemma. Once again he is asked to take a leap of faith. Jesus asks him to believe that his son is already cured. But believing means leaving immediately, rather than trying to bring Jesus with him. And we read: “The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way.”

Only when the man arrives, and is told that the fever left his son “at the seventh hour,” does he receive a sign

confirming his faith. “And he himself believed, and all his household.” He doesn’t just believe in the miracle. He now has faith in our Lord: he has become a disciple.

At first, this man’s faith was not very strong. But when invited to believe, he decides to do so. And that is enough for our Lord, who performs a spectacular sign. As a result, this man’s faith was confirmed. That is how God often acts. After we have believed in Him, which means putting our trust in Him, then He grants us what we need, which in turn reaffirms our faith. Not only that, but it also strengthens others. For as a result of the miracle, his entire family came to believe in Jesus.

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