

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jan 13th 2016

The gospel today shows us the daily routine of Jesus' ministry. It began with visiting a family or a person who was sick. Then he would do some healing and driving out demons from the person. The news of his miraculous work spread quickly around the region. In just a short time, people brought to him the sick and the possessed to be healed by him. The crowd usually became so big that it would take him hours to do the work before he was able to eat, drink, and have some rest. The gospel passage today even tells us that the people started gathering around him after dusk. It is possible that he was only done with the work just before midnight. Perhaps, he would also preach to them in between his healing works. Early in the morning, he would wake up. Instead of resuming the work, he went to a deserted place and conversed with his Father, and instead of going back to the people who witnessed his works and have gathered again at the house he stayed, hoping to see him, he decided to go to another village or town.

Perhaps his daily routine is somewhat similar to the one we have every day. We go to work. We solve the problem of the day. Because of our passion or the work demand, we work over time. We barely have time to eat, drink, or have rest until after dusk. We get home tired; do some house chores and then go to bed. The difference is perhaps here: We wake up early in the morning. Almost late, we are in rush to go to work; resume working on the unfinished problem from yesterday or take another problem with similar ease. In terms of relationship, we may hang out only with those who love us and keep away from those who hate us. We help only those who care for us and stay away from those who do not care. This is a kind of problem that we rarely solve. We do not move forward and we get stuck in the same "village." The question is, "Where is our conversation with God? Do we usually set aside time to pray? Do we move forward in terms of relationship and service for others?"

St. Ignatius Loyola taught us, "Pray as if everything depended on you; work as if everything depended on God." It is just the opposite of the popular belief. In Ignatian spirituality, we pray because what we will do is important. The prayer becomes a locus where we chat with God. We are considering before God whether what we will do is in tune with God's will or not. In other words, we pray for God's light and guidance from his Holy Spirit as we ponder what to do. Once we get the confirmation that to do something one way is better than the other, we take the action with a complete trust in God. There will be no fear in resolving any problem, including relationship problems which sometimes discourage us.

Taking time to pray, during which Jesus was considering different kinds of options with their good and bad sides, and how they will glorify his Father's works, leads Jesus to go on to other villages, leaving the village of Simon's mother, and leaving behind the people who have been nice to him. He went to different people. There was no guarantee that the people in the next village would be nice to him. There was no guarantee that the work would be less hard than the one in the previous village. However, the fruit of his morning prayer was certain – that the goal of his coming is to bring the good

news for all people; therefore he must go on. He took the action with a complete trust in God.

Do not we feel that we want to imitate Jesus' daily routine where a conversation with God is the core of our daily life? Do not we feel that we want to glorify God in every single thing we do? Do not we feel that we want to move forward in relationship and service to others? Let us set aside times for a personal conversation with the Lord our God every day, so that whatever we do is in tune with God's will.

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