

Mass 17 January 2018 – New Provincial Ministers

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Mark, the Evangelist (Mk 3:1-6) presents the scene of the healing of a man, on sacred day (Saturday), in which any type of activity is prohibited. Jesus places the paralytic amid the assembly and raises the dilemma: “*Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?*” (v. 4). What should we do?

We begin the gathering of the general Definitorium with the new provincial Ministers and custodians by addressing the question of the Gospel to ourselves, because His Word challenges us and orients our ministry. We will focus on two aspects:

* JESUS TAKES THE INITIATIVE OF DRAWING NEAR. It is his desire to reach humankind and this fact accompanies his whole life and his works, because he “he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance” (Phil 2:7); He is the one who seeks to save what was lost. He did the same thing with the disciples, with the Samaritan woman, with Zacchaeus and when he came to Lazarus’s tomb.

When Jesus draws near, hope comes with him. He draws near with comfort and mercy. Life comes with him. Let's not forget that Jesus Christ has a partiality for each person and infuses confidence in salvation, because good has no limit nor is it subject to any human law. The Disciples of Christ are called to follow the same dynamics of good, which consists in "going to our brothers and sisters", especially in those more difficult or problematic moments as did the Lord.

* JESUS PRESENTS AN INTEREST FOR THE NEEDY. As the Gospel tells us, the person does not seek Jesus, still Jesus perceives that he can do something for the person. The scene takes place in the synagogue and on a Saturday, indicating that it is a place and day dedicated to God. But Jesus’s gaze is directed at the person with a paralyzed arm, and he says, “Come up here before us” (v. 3).

Jesus challenges us even today. So what are we to do, enforce the law or heal this person? The Pharisees remain silent, but Jesus cures the sick person by breaking the law of the Sabbath, and makes clear his message: God's will is to seek the liberation and the wellbeing of the person. That is why the religion that is not understood of the human suffering is illusory, because “the sabbath was made for mankind, not humankind for the sabbath” (Mk 2.27).

Brothers, the example of Jesus shows us the presence of a God who gives life and wants everyone to live joyfully. God is not a weight for our existence and without whom we would live more peacefully. On the contrary, the believer knows that Jesus Christ allows us to find him in human history offering hope, especially in the difficult times that paralyze us.

Let us ask God to assist us with the Spirit so that in our decisions we can give priority to the person of the brother or sister, especially those who live on the fringes of society or brotherhood.