



1) Opening prayer

Almighty God,
every good thing comes from you.
Fill our hearts with love for you,
increase our faith,
and by your constant care
protect the good you have given us.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

2) Gospel Reading - Luke 4,38-44

Leaving the synagogue Jesus went to Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in the grip of a high fever and they asked him to do something for her. Standing over her he rebuked the fever and it left her. And she immediately got up and began to serve them.

At sunset all those who had friends suffering from diseases of one kind or another brought them to him, and laying his hands on each he cured them.

Devils too came out of many people, shouting, 'You are the Son of God.' But he warned them and would not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Christ. When daylight came he left the house and made his way to a lonely place. The crowds went to look for him, and when they had caught up with him they wanted to prevent him leaving them, but he answered, 'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns too, because that is what I was sent to do.' And he continued his proclamation in the synagogues of Judaea.

3) Reflection

? The Gospel today narrates four different events: the cure of Peter's mother-in-law (Lk 4, 38-39), the cure of many sick people at night, after Saturday (Lk 4, 40-41), the prayer of Jesus in a deserted place (Lk 4, 42) and his insistence on the mission (Lk 4, 43-44). With small differences Luke follows and adapts the information taken from the Gospel of Mark.

? Luke 4, 38-39: Jesus restores life for service. After having participated in the celebration of Saturday, in the Synagogue, Jesus goes to Peter's house and cures his mother-in-law. The cure causes her to render service immediately, already standing. Having recovered her health and dignity, she places herself at the service of the people. Jesus not only cures, but he cures in such a way that the person places herself at the service of life.

? Luke 4, 40-41: Jesus accepts and cures the marginalized. At night, when the first stars appear in the sky, after Saturday is over, Jesus accepts and cures the sick and those possessed who the people bring to him. The sick and the possessed were the most marginalized persons at that time. They had no one to whom to go. They were at the mercy of public charity; besides, religion considered them impure. They could not participate in the community. It was as if God rejected and excluded them. Jesus accepts and cures them, placing his hands on each one of them. Thus, it is clear in what the Good News of God consists and what he wants to do in the life of persons: to accept the marginalized and the excluded and to integrate them into the community, to live with others.

"Devils came out of many persons shouting: "You are the Son of God!" But he warned them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ". At that time the title Son of God did not have as yet the density and depth that it has for us today. Jesus did not allow the devils to speak. He did not want an easy propaganda dictated by spectacular expulsions.

? Luke 4, 42a: To remain united to the Father by means of prayer. "When daylight came he left the house and made his way to a lonely place. The crowds went to look for him, and when they had caught up with him they wanted to prevent him from leaving them". Here we see Jesus praying. He has to make an enormous effort to have time available and a place suitable for prayer. He goes to a deserted place to be able to stay alone with God. Many times, the Gospels speak about Jesus' prayer, in silence (Lk 3, 21-22; 4, 1-2.3-12; 5,15-16; 6,12; 9,18; 10,21; 5,16; 9,18; 11,1; 9, 28;23,34; Mt 14, 22-23; 26,38; Jn 11, 41-42; 17,1-26; Mk 1,35; Lk 3, 21-22). Through prayer, he maintains alive the conscience of his mission.

? Luke 4, 42b-44: To maintain alive the conscience of one's own mission and not think about the result. Jesus becomes known. People follow him and they did not want him to leave them. Jesus does not respond to this petition and says: "I must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God to the other towns too, because that is what I was sent to do". Jesus was very clear about his mission. He does not stop at the result that he has already obtained, but he wishes to maintain very alive the awareness of his mission. It is the mission received from the Father which orientates him when he has to take a decision. I have been sent for this! And here in this text this conscience which is so alive springs as fruit of his prayer.

4) Personal questions

? Jesus spent much time in prayer and to be alone with the Father, and he looked for this time. Do I dedicate time for prayer and to be alone with God?

? Jesus had a clear conscience of his mission. And I, a Christian, am I conscious that I have a mission, or do I live without a mission?

5) Concluding Prayer

We are waiting for Yahweh;
he is our help and our shield,
for in him our heart rejoices,
in his holy name we trust. (Ps 33,20-21)