

**Homily – Wednesday of the 22nd Week in Ordinary Time
Televised Mass with Senior Staff – September 6, 2023**

Would we not like for the same that Paul says of Epaphras to be said about us! Epaphras lived in truth for his love of God's Love, making himself trustworthy. The Lord is willing to heal us of any disease, so that we can live by faith and be trustworthy. Epaphras did not allow himself to be conditioned by his situation as a slave, but rather he allowed himself to be freed by the Holy Spirit. If we allow ourselves to be conditioned by our ailments, we hinder the Holy Spirit. Between servitude and the ability to serve there is a gap that cannot be bridged with our human weakness. By healing, the Lord releases from servitude.

When the fever left Simon's mother-in-law, "She got up immediately and waited on them." We need to be healthy to serve others. Service is an essential sign of the Kingdom. Jesus will say later: "For who is greater: the one seated at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one seated at table? I am among you as the one who serves." (Lk 22:27). – "I have given you a model to follow..." (Jn 13:15). We must first be freed and healed to be able to serve.

Jesus is the one who heals. In the same chapter, from Luke's Gospel, the Lord had fulfilled the passage from Isaiah by making it heard in the synagogue. Jesus is the Incarnate Word. The poor are brought glad tidings, liberty is proclaimed to captives, the blind recover their sight, the oppressed go free. With his miracles, Jesus witnesses to the power he receives from the Father.

"At daybreak, Jesus left and went to a deserted place." The power he receives from the Father is manifested after he has spent

time in prayer. He is setting an example for us. Only through a true encounter with God we receive the ability and strength to serve. Through his own encounters with the Father, Jesus taught us the quintessence of prayer: "...not my will but yours be done." (Lk 22:42). – "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me..." (Jn 11:42-43).

"The crowds went looking for him, and when they came to him, they tried to prevent him from leaving them." They wanted to keep him for themselves. Jesus does not grant their demand. Jesus does not belong to a particular group or a single people. He is the **Common Good** (with capital letters), God's gift of Himself for all humanity.

Pope Francis has said: "Christians must learn the 'wisdom of God's caresses' and have the humility to open their heart to be healed by the Lord." We are called to heal others with the same healing we receive at the Table of the Lord, and we receive it as we give it. Let us pray for the grace to learn to heal: pray, be healed, and serve through witness of God's Incarnate Word.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, help us be aware that we are under your shadow and protection, so we may be enabled to take by the hand those who are prostrated by the fever of despair.