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THE CURING OF THE HUNCHBACKED WOMAN

The hunchbacked woman

The wondrous healing of the hunchbacked woman by the Lord is preserved only in the Gospel according to Luke. It took place on the day of the Sabbath in a synagogue during the Lord's last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem.

In the synagogue was a woman, whose body for 18 whole years was so bent over, that she could not lift her head up at all. The blessed professor Panayiotis Trembelas observes that this woman seems to have been a pious person. Even though for many years she was troubled by the dreadful illness which had deformed her body and made her movement difficult and painful, she would go on the Sabbath to the synagogues, to hear the word of God.

She didn't suffer that which not a few people suffer, when some affliction, illness or trial comes to them. Whereas, in other words, up to that time they show a form of piety and religiosity, when some trial finds them, and God does not soon deliver them from it, their faith is lessened or even lost, they abandon the spiritual struggle and become full of negative thoughts about God and the Church.

On the contrary, the hunchbacked woman, as if someone else was suffering, continued remaining near God and silently forbearing her cross and furthermore without protest. She loved God selflessly, with much grateful honor and with a grateful disposition. She didn't pose as a presupposition of her faith and love for God, that everything be going well for her. She also had nobility. Nor did she bother others about her problem, or even the Lord Jesus. The Lord Himself, when He saw her, had compassion upon her. He took the initiative and spoke to her and with His very God befitting and all mighty word He immediately cured her. The first thing she spontaneously did as soon as she was healed, was to address glorification to God. She worshiped and glorified God both in her illness and when she became well, because as a genuine daughter of Abraham she had founded her life on the unshakable rock of faith in Him.

Jesus the perfect doctor of man

Jesus cured the hunchbacked woman with His word and with the touch of His hand. With His divine word He revealed that her illness was a penance which had been ceded to her very likely for some sin of hers. The explanation which He gave for the cause of her hardship reminds us of the book of Job as regards the following: There the devil troubled Job, when he received permission from God. Job's trial ended after a very long time, when God Himself intervened and with His divine power and authority He immediately changed the condition and restored his person to his previous glory and health. Likewise, the illness of the hunchbacked woman, as the Lord explained, is due to the Devils energy, which obviously occurred following the allowance of God. And now, after 18 years, the incarnate God intervenes in her life and with His word He loosens her many year long penance and again grants her her health. With His omniscience, as a perfect knower of the soul and life of His creature, He knows well that the cause of her hardship had been cured now and the medicine of her illness was no longer necessary.

He didn't settle however only in word, but He also placed his hand upon her. Man is dual, comprised of body and soul, and in a dual manner he is healed by God. Both with the invisible and mystical and with the manifest and sensorial way. This shows very clearly in all the mysteries of the Church, in which the invisible grace of God is granted to people with sensorial means. Thus, the Lord, mystically and sensorially healed the woman in soul and body, revealing simultaneously His two natures, the divine and human one.

Theophanes Kerameas observes that the evangelist Luke, who was a doctor and knew well related to the health and illness of the body, through this event which he preserves, corrects the mistaken opinion of whoever is not able to see and suspect anything other than the sensorial things, but they render all the sufferings of the body to the loosening of the nerves, to the dissolving of the spine and the like.

We however, without scorning the doctors and medicines, let us focus our struggle on how to always do God's will in our life, because there lies our health and eternal life. There also lies our deliverance from whatever troubles the soul and the body. Furthermore Christ abolished death. All people, faithful and unbelieving, will receive our bodies incorrupt. Consequently, let us be mainly concerned about our soul, because if we give our soul to Christ, it will receive its healing and will rejoice eternally together with its body. If however we are indifferent to the soul's health, far from Christ it will always suffer together with its body. So since the essence of our health and happiness lies in the condition of our soul, let us strive to take care of it and to cure it, with the means which the Church of Christ our God offers us freely.

Archim. P. K.