

Daily Homily
St. Blaise; Bishop and Martyr
4 Week in Ordinary Time, Wednesday
3 February 2021
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Can you imagine: Jesus seems to be discouraged.

The word itself means to lose courage. Going a little deeper and a little further... the word courage comes from the Latin, "cor," meaning, "heart." So to be discouraged is not just about losing courage, but losing our core, it is about losing heart.

Jesus seems to be discouraged. The Gospel of the day ends on that note... not a hopeful note, not a happy, loving note, but on a note of discouragement.

Up until now, people are amazed at what he can do. He is growing in popularity, to the extent that he is trying to downplay his presence so that he can move about in towns freely and not as some sensation.

However, the Gospel today situates him in his native place. They take offense at him. He is amazed, shocked, surprised by their lack of faith.

I get discouraged sometimes. I think mostly over when people ... from all walks of life ... try to make irrelevant our Catholic faith. "It doesn't matter what you do, Jesus is going to love you anyway." Really? If it doesn't matter, then why do any of us bother with this? And quite frankly, I'm not sure I have the words to take that mindset away from anyone. Sometimes, my words go without effect. Sometimes my silence doesn't help either.

But what do I do with the discouragement? Well, the Gospel ends on this note today because I think sometimes we just have to sit with it, wrestle with it a bit. I also thank God for close friends I can talk to about it, and good brothers too! That only helps to some extent. Ultimately, I have to be alone with it. When alone with it, what is there to do? Well, I'm not being overly pious, but I'm being real – I go to Jesus alone. I go to his most potentially discouraging moment – the cross. He could have said as he was nailed there, "It was all for nothing." Instead he speaks words of forgiveness, words of Paradise, and ultimately the words, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." It was a heroic moment, a moment of not giving up.

Commending our spirit – even if it's a spirit dashed down and not soaring high – commending our spirit to the Father, sometimes that the only way to regain our core, our heart ... sometimes it's the only way to regain our courage to carry on.