



Monday of the Second Week of Advent

One day as Jesus was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there, and the power of the Lord was with him for healing. And some men brought on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed; they were trying to bring him in and set him in his presence. But not finding a way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on the stretcher through the tiles into the middle in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "As for you, your sins are forgiven." Then the scribes and Pharisees began to ask themselves, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who but God alone can forgive sins?" Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them in reply, "What are you thinking in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the one who was paralyzed, "I say to you, rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home." He stood up immediately before them, picked up what he had been lying on, and went home, glorifying God. Then astonishment seized them all and they glorified God, and, struck with awe, they said, "We have seen incredible things today."

Introductory Prayer: Lord you are the author of all things and you have power to forgive sins. Though my faith is still weak I do believe in you. And I also trust in your goodness and mercy. Here I am before you in prayer, longing once more to love you with all my mind, heart, soul and strength.

Petition:

Lord, help me to seek you in my life above all else.

1. The Pharisees' Faith: The Pharisees sat in front of Christ watching him cure the sick. Earlier they had seen many other miracles, but despite what they saw they could not bring themselves to believe in Christ. Miracle after miracle couldn't change their mind. Jesus decides to give them a decisive miracle so that they will believe. He decides to cure the paralytic to show his power to forgive sins. Since disease for the Pharisees was a sign of sin, they should have been ready to accept Jesus' message of healing and forgiveness. But they were too wrapped up in seeking their own plans and protecting their own honor to discern God's loving mercy behind what they witnessed. How often do we want God to give us a sign, so we can follow his plan? And how often are we not open to what he tells us, simply and directly because we're too focused on achieving our own plans?

2. The Paralytic's Faith: The paralytic needed no signs. He believed Jesus could help him. His faith was so strong he would not let the difficulties overcome him. He couldn't walk so he found someone to carry him. When he arrived, he couldn't get to Christ, so his men brought him in through the roof. He was determined to see Christ because he knew what Christ could do for him. His faith was so strong it moved him to action. He had a living faith, which goes far beyond mere ideas. His faith moved him to find our Lord no matter the difficulties. What have I done to seek Christ, to meet him face to face? What have I been prepared to do in order to receive his grace? Do I give up my prayer or my apostolate at the first difficulty?

3. For God's Glory: Jesus didn't perform this miracle for himself or his own glory. He sought only God's glory. We see how everyone glorifies God after the miracle. It's almost as if Christ is forgotten. Christ sought only to do what would glorify the Father. How often do we seek our own glory when we work on the apostolate or perform an act of charity? How often do we hope someone will remember us and say, "Thank You" although we are here to build Christ's Kingdom for God's glory alone? We need to constantly renew our purity of intention.

Dialogue with Christ: Lord, how great was the faith of the paralytic! He was humble enough to find you and strong enough in his faith that nothing could keep him from you. Grant me the gift of a humble heart and a strong faith so I can be constant and dedicated in seeking to encounter you in my life and in fulfilling your will for your glory and the good of others alone.

Resolution: Today I will look for solutions to the problems that come my way, and I will renew my intention to perform my duties for God's glory throughout the day.