



Mark 2:1-12

1 When Jesus returned to Capernaum some time later, word went round that he was back; **2** and so many people collected that there was no room left, even in front of the door. He was preaching the word to them **3** when some people came bringing him a paralytic carried by four men, **4** but as the crowd made it impossible to get the man to him, they stripped the roof over the place where Jesus was; and when they had made an opening, they lowered the stretcher on which the paralytic lay. **5** Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, 'My child, your sins are forgiven.' **6** Now some scribes were sitting there, and they thought to themselves, **7** 'How can this man talk like that? He is blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God?' **8** Jesus, inwardly aware that this was what they were thinking, said to them, 'Why do you have these thoughts in your hearts? **9** Which of these is easier: to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven" or to say, "Get up, pick up your stretcher and walk?"' **10** But to prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,' - **11** he said to the paralytic - 'I order you: get up, pick up your stretcher, and go off home.' **12** And the man got up, picked up his stretcher at once and walked out in front of everyone, so that they were all astounded and praised God saying, 'We have never seen anything like this.'

Other readings: Isaiah 43:18-19,21-22,24-25 Psalm 40 (41) 2 Corinthians 1:18-22

The miracle story we read this Sunday presents several interesting aspects. First of all, it is a testimony to the faith of the four men who are determined despite all the obstacles to bring the paralytic to Jesus for healing. Earlier the disciples had taken Jesus to cure the mother-in-law of Simon. Now it is these men who facilitate the healing of their friend.

A second important aspect of the story is that Jesus begins by announcing the forgiveness of sins. He seems to be telling us that the inner healing of forgiveness is more important than physical well-being. It is possible to experience a deep inner peace, the peace of God, even in the midst of serious illness.

This story also includes a controversy. The paralytic says nothing in reply to Jesus' words of forgiveness, but the evangelist records the attitude of the scribes, experts in the Jewish law, who take offence at the words of Jesus. Jesus is aware of their thoughts and challenges them. For the first time Mark notes the antagonism between Jesus and the religious authorities. There will be frequent references to disputes and disagreements in the chapters which lie ahead. The reaction of the scribes in this passage stands in sharp contrast to the delight of the crowds, who praise God for the man's healing.

Am I eager to overcome any obstacles in the practice of my faith?

How much do I value the inner healing of forgiveness, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Let us pray for a fuller understanding of the gifts brought by Christ.

Let us praise God for the healing and forgiveness which come to us through Christ.