

7th Sunday of the Year B

*Lord, your mercy is my hope, my heart rejoices
in your saving power. I will sing to the Lord
for his goodness to me. (Ps 13:6)*



First Reading

Isaiah 43:18-19.21-22.24-25

Thus says the Lord: No need to recall the past, no need to think about what was done before. See, I am doing a new deed, even now it comes to light; can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the wilderness, paths in the wilds. The people I have formed for myself will sing my praises.

Jacob, you have not invoked me, you have not troubled yourself, Israel, on my behalf. Instead you have burdened me with your sins, troubled me with your iniquities. I it is, I it is, who must blot out everything and not remember your sins.

Second Reading

2 Corinthians 1:18-22

I swear by God's truth, there is no Yes and No about what we say to you. The Son of God, the Christ Jesus that we proclaimed among you – I mean Silvanus and Timothy and I – was never Yes and No: with him it was always Yes, and however many the promises God made, the Yes to them all is in him. That is why it is "through him" that we answer Amen to the praise of God. Remember it is God himself who assures us all, and you, of our standing in Christ, and has anointed us, marking us with his seal and giving us the pledge, the Spirit, that we carry in our hearts.

When Jesus returned to Capernaum, word went round that he was back; and so many people collected that there was no room left, even in front of the door. He was preaching the word to them when some people came bringing him a paralytic carried by four men, 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. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "My child, your sins are forgiven." Now some scribes were sitting there, and they thought to themselves, "How can this man talk like that? He is blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God?" Jesus, inwardly aware that this was what they were thinking, said to them, "Why do you have these thoughts in your hearts? 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'? But to prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," – he said to the paralytic – "I order you: get up, pick up your stretcher, and go off home." 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."

Meditation

"We have never seen anything like this!" (Mk 2:12). The Capernaum crowds are more fascinated with Jesus' healing of the paralytic than with his forgiveness of sins. The scribes, for their part, are indignant with this man who takes on himself the divine privilege of pardoning faults. They do not understand that Christ freed the body of the paralytic in order to show that he can liberate the spirit.

Faced with a similar manifestation of power, our reaction might be just as ambiguous as the enthusiasm of the people of Capernaum. Given the opportunity, we would line up to obtain from Jesus a bodily healing. We are not so quick to ask that our hearts be healed. We suffer no lack of words in detailing our aches and pains. We are much more reticent in baring our hearts.

Yet Jesus can change hearts. He has not come just to restore physical health but to pardon, to love us with that mad love of which God alone is capable. "See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Is 43:19).