

Week Four/Day Five: *The Healer of Body and Soul*

1. **Place yourself in God's presence.**
2. **Ask for the grace that you seek in this meditation:** *knowledge of Jesus Christ so as to love Him more deeply and serve Him with greater fidelity.*
3. **Today's Meditation:**

"But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins—he then said to the paralytic—Rise, take up your bed and go home." (Jn 2:11).

Jesus has many titles: *Lamb of God, Son of man, Lord, Christ, King of kings, Master, Teacher, etc.* One that also suites Him is *Divine Physician* or *Healer*. There are many instances in the Gospel wherein Jesus is known to perform great miracles of healing. These miracles were signs of His divinity. He enacted them not to impress the people, but to verify His teaching that He was the long-expected Messiah, the Son of God. Despite Jesus' power to heal the body, and by this means manifest His divinity, Jesus greatest concern was the healing of souls through the forgiveness of sins. His power to forgive sins was a far greater manifestation of His divinity than the healing of the body. This we know from the reaction of those present at the moments He attributed to Himself the power to forgive sins. Let us turn to two places in the Scriptures that can help us understand this:

Matthew 9:1-7 –

And getting into a boat Jesus crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For 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 then said to the paralytic—"Rise, take up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Mark 2:1-7 –

And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak like this? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Both of these passages account the same story with slightly different details. St. Mark certainly provides us with a more detailed account of Jesus healing the paralytic. Our focus is not, however, on the discrepancies, but on the message: Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. What does this say about Him? It says that Jesus is God! This is why in both accounts the scribes and Pharisees accuse Jesus of "blasphemy". If the forgiveness of sins belonged to God alone, and if this man, Jesus, was

proclaiming He had the power to forgive sins, then He is making Himself God. To the Jewish mind this was blasphemy, but to the Christian mind this is revelation!

Jesus' incarnation and His determination to endure the "hour" of His passion was for a single purpose: the forgiveness of sins. This is why in the Creed we profess, *For us men and for **our salvation** He came down from heaven.* Our salvation from what? Sin! And its consequence which is death.

If Jesus gives His entire life for the forgiveness of our sins—if His love to the end was so deep that He would sacrifice His life to free us from the bondage of sin—can we go about life making compromises with our sins? If we truly wish to love Jesus and serve Him more faithfully, can we allow sin to continue to have a place in our life? No! Jesus wants to heal us of many ailments, but the greatest is our own sinfulness. But are we cooperating with this work? Are we frequenting the sacrament of Confession? Are we making a daily examination of conscience and asking for forgiveness each day when we have failed? Are we making compromises with our sinfulness, excusing ourselves for sins that we know displease God and weaken my relationship with Him?

Meditate on this questions and make the resolution to go to Confession before you make your Consecration on Saturday.

- Today's Prayer –

O Jesus living in Mary, come and live in your servant in the Spirit of your holiness, in the fullness of your gifts, in the perfection of your ways, in the truth of your virtues, in the communion of your mysteries. Subdue within me the power of flesh and demon by you Holy Spirit, for the glory of God the Father. Amen.