

March 21, 2023



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH LENT

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HEALING AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

By Sister Jeanne Fallon, CSJ

Today's Gospel

There was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem at the Sheep Gate a pool called in Hebrew Bethesda, with five porticoes. In these lay a large number of ill, blind, lame, and crippled. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been ill for a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be well?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am on my way, someone else gets down there before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your mat, and walk." Immediately the man became well, took up his mat, and walked.

Now that day was a sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry your mat." He answered them, "The man who made me well told me, 'Take up your mat and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who told you, 'Take it up and walk'?" The man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away, since there was a crowd there. After this Jesus found him in the temple area and said to him, "Look, you are well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may happen to you." The man went and told the Jews that Jesus was the one who

had made him well. Therefore, the Jews began to persecute Jesus because he did this on a sabbath.

JOHN 5:1-16

Reflection

For thirty-eight years a paralyzed man had been lying on his mat by the pool, waiting for the opportunity to be well. Jesus approached and asked him **if he wanted to be made well**. What followed was a long litany of missed opportunities and complaints, instead of simply saying, “Yes, I want to be well.” Immediately, Jesus’ healing words empowered him: “Get up, pick up your mat and walk.” Jesus left the area because a crowd was forming.

After having been paralyzed for thirty-eight years, there was a question about his carrying his mat on the sabbath, which was considered unlawful. Some leaders wanted to know who gave him authority to carry his mat. In the meantime, Jesus found the cured man in the temple area and told him that, now that he has been healed, not to sin anymore. Jesus was not saying that his disease was the result of sin, as some believed. He was warning him that his healing was a divine gift, and it is only right that he mend his ways and recognize God’s lovingkindness to him. Jesus’ belief was that “the sabbath was made for humankind, not humankind for the sabbath” (Mark 2:27). Making this man whole again was more important than breaking the sabbath law, even though it would give rise to hostilities against Jesus.



For Pondering & Prayer

Imagine what it might have been like for this man to take a walk in the sunshine and see the beautiful cloud formations or the hillside covered with blooming flowers and to smell their fragrance while a gentle breeze caressed his face. He learned the name of his healer and that God had shown favor to him after so many years of being infirm. How did this event change his life? What path will he take now? Was he brought back into his family, no longer excluded by his illness?

If Jesus asked you **if you wanted to be made well**, how would you respond? Do you long for bodily healing or emotional wellness or a new attitude toward life or the healing of a broken relationship? Perhaps the following prayer will give you words to soothe your soul.

WHOLENESS AND WELL-BEING

God of wholeness, God of healing, envelop us with wholeness and well-being. Heal us in body and soul. Let all the elements of our bodies work together in perfect symmetry and in peaceful harmony. Remove every trace of illness, every hint of infirmity; send the healing which You alone can bring.

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