

Daily Reflections

ADVENT

The Divine Intervention

December 5, 2016

Scripture

Luke 5:17-26

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."

Our Scripture Reflection

The hearts of the scribes and Pharisees were filled with envy. They just could not get over the fact that a young preacher from a podunk town called Nazareth, the son of a carpenter no less, could be doing such incredible things. Even more, He was turning the gaze of the people away from them and onto Himself in the process. What is at the root of their envy? A genuine lack of faith and trust in God. When God is my "all and all", I do not need to look over my shoulder to see, and therefore, desire what another has. On this Advent day, may we seek union with God above all else.

Food for your Journey

In his book *The Magnificent Defeat*, Frederick Buechner says that "The love for equals is a human thing — of friend for friend, brother for brother. It is to love what is loving and lovely. The world smiles.

"The love for the less fortunate is a beautiful thing — the love for those who suffer, for those who are poor, the sick, the failures, the unlovely. This is compassion, and it touches the heart of the world.

"The love for the more fortunate is a rare thing — to love those who succeed where we fail, to rejoice without envy with those who rejoice, the love of the poor for the rich, of the black man for the white man. The world is always bewildered by its saints.

“And then there is the love for the enemy — love for the one who does not love you but mocks, threatens, and inflicts pain. The tortured’s love for the torturer.

This is God’s love. It conquers the world.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, With so many wants and desires tugging at my heart, help me to adjust my focus. May I seek You and to please You above all things. Amen.