

FAITH IN GOD'S WILL

In today's reading from the Holy Gospel from Matthew 9: 27-35, we are shown the perseverance and determination of the two blind men:

And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country. As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

It is exceedingly difficult for a blind man to navigate through the basic challenges and needs of life. These two blind men were amidst the crowd of people that recently witnessed the miraculous resurrection of Jairus's daughter. Not being able to witness the event themselves, the clamor of the surrounding people aroused great hope in them, sparking a determination to reach our Saviour. Despite the inherent handicap of their blindness, they pushed forward, using the intact senses of their hearing, crying out repeatedly, "Have mercy on us." They did not cry out for healing, but for mercy. This calling for mercy, the foundation of the Jesus Prayer and the numerous petitions during Divine services, is a pure, unconditional and contrite prayer. Eventually, by their perseverance, despite many physical obstacles, they succeeded in drawing closer, coming under the same roof of our Saviour, (as we faithful do when we enter the holy Church).

Christ then approaches them, and asks the critical question: "Believe ye that I am *able* to do this?" What our Lord didn't say was, "Believe ye that I *will* do this?" Our Saviour was testing their faith in His "ability". Christ then chose, out of his mercy and wisdom, this time, to bring healing to their plight.

Holy Scripture is replete with examples of Christ's merciful healings, bringing attention to faith that works to unlock the action of grace. But, in the world, we also behold many examples of faithful and pious believers praying for mercy, and their plights continue without abatement, sometimes even intensifying. Why?

The answer lies in the Gospel reading from last Sunday:

Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you. (Matthew 9:2)

Here our Saviour emphasizes the manner of healing that holds greatest importance, that of spiritual healing, which opens the door to God's Kingdom and life everlasting. What good is it if we are granted physical healing, with the opportunity to enjoy a few good years of good health, and still lose our souls eternally? As difficult as it is for our pride-infected human nature to embrace this, we must work to accept with uncompromising faith that our all-loving and all-knowing Lord knows our needs, needs that relate to eternal rescue of our souls, better than we possibly could. This is the **faith** that we need to embrace, profess, and live! Yes, we may have faith in God's ability to heal, but do we have full faith in His will? His will is to do whatever is necessary to draw the soul to Him through repentance, effecting eternal salvation. And for some, it may involve the continued carrying of a difficult cross, designed to cultivate and secure a spirit of humility and repentance, necessary for salvation.

Just as the blind men were met with physical obstacles that impeded their access to our Saviour, (but they persevered), there are formidable obstacles to spiritual healing, namely, those of our passions and sins. These obstacles are only removed by fervent and sincere repentance, and receiving the "touch" of our Saviour through the Mystery of Holy Communion. The Church, the Spiritual Hospital, provides the necessary therapeutic means of softening of one's heart, through acts of self-denial, rendering it receptive to the soul-saving remedy of repentance.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, let us place our full and unconditional faith in Christ, trusting in His holy Will, Who provides whatever is truly necessary for the rescue of our souls, (through relief from or the augmentation of one's cross), bringing spiritual healing and eternal salvation of our souls. Let us spiritually persevere, prayerfully beseeching our Lord to help us overcome the obstacles of our weaknesses and passions, and remain invigorated with the knowledge of His inexhaustible love, wisdom and mercy.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.