

St. Philip the Apostle
Roman Catholic Church



Friday, December 3, 2021

- Friday of the First Week of Advent
- Memorial of St. Francis Xavier, Priest
- Edward Letavic

First Reading: Isaiah 29:17-24

Thus says the Lord God: But a very little while, and Lebanon shall be changed into an orchard, and the orchard be regarded as a forest! On that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book; And out of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see. The lowly will ever find joy in the Lord, and the poor rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the tyrant will be no more and the arrogant will have gone; All who are alert to do evil will be cut off, those whose mere word condemns a man, Who ensnare his defender at the gate, and leave the just man with an empty claim. Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of the house of Jacob, who redeemed Abraham: Now Jacob shall have nothing to be ashamed of, nor shall his face grow pale. When his children see the work of my hands in his midst, They shall keep my name holy; they shall reverence the Holy One of Jacob, and be in awe of the God of Israel. Those who err in spirit shall acquire understanding, and those who find fault shall receive instruction.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 27:1, 4, 13-14

The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?

The Lord is my life's refuge;
of whom should I be afraid? *R/.*

One thing I ask of the Lord;
this I seek:

To dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
That I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord
and contemplate his temple. *R/.*

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the Lord
in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord with courage;
be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD. *R/.*

Gospel: Matthew 9:27-31

As Jesus passed by, two blind men followed him, crying out, "Son of David, have pity on us!" When

he entered the house, the blind men approached him and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I can do this?" "Yes, Lord," they said to him. Then he touched their eyes and said, "Let it be done for you according to your faith." And their eyes were opened. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." But they went out and spread word of him through all that land.

Reflection

Do you believe that I can do this? (Matthew 9:28)

If Jesus asked you this question, you'd likely respond as the two blind men did in today's Gospel: "Yes, Lord" (Matthew 9:28). We know that Jesus healed many people during his public ministry. We also know that as the risen Christ, he still heals people today.

But if we believe that Jesus *can* heal, then why doesn't he heal every person for whom we pray? As Jesus touched the eyes of the two blind men, he said, "Let it be done for you according to your faith" (Matthew 9:29). We might think, *I have faith, Lord, so why didn't you heal the young mother I prayed for who died leaving her children behind? Why don't you heal my spouse's cancer or my son's depression?*

This is a mystery we may never understand this side of heaven, and it can test our faith. We know that God cares deeply for each of us; he has counted every hair on our heads (Matthew 10:30). Yet we also know that he doesn't always say yes to every prayer we offer.

But that doesn't mean we should stop praying. Rather, we should imitate these two blind men and the persistent woman in Jesus' parable (Luke 18:1-8). We should never give up asking, even when a situation seems dire. Instead, we should say, "Jesus, I believe you can do this!"

But as you pray, also ask God for the grace to surrender the situation into his hands. It's not always easy to offer our most pressing petitions to God and then let go of the outcome, but the more you practice, the more your trust in him will grow.

God may give you a healing, maybe even a miraculous one. Or the healing might be different than you expected, perhaps emotional or spiritual. Maybe you won't notice any change at all. Whatever happens, Jesus hears your prayers; he is always at your side, loving you, comforting you, and sustaining you. He *will* bring good out of your suffering, even if you can't see it right away. After all, he is your Redeemer. By dying on the cross and rising from the dead, he has delivered you from sin and death. And that, in the end, is the greatest healing of all!

Jesus, as I pray for healing, help me to surrender all my needs into your loving hands.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.

Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,

O Prince of the heavenly hosts,

by the power of God,

thrust into hell Satan,

and all the evil spirits,

who prowl about the world

seeking the ruin of souls.

Amen.