

# Thursday of the Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time

**Gospel text (Mt 9,1-8):** Jesus got back into the boat, crossed the lake again, and came to his hometown. Here they brought a paralyzed man to him, lying on a bed. Jesus saw their faith and said to the paralytic, «Courage, my son! Your sins are forgiven». Then some teachers of the Law said to themselves, «This man insults God». Jesus was aware of what they were thinking, and said, «Why have you such evil thoughts? Which is easier to say: ‘Your sins are forgiven’ or ‘Stand up and walk’? You must know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins». He then said to the paralyzed man, «Stand up! Take your stretcher and go home». The man got up, and went home. When the crowds saw this, they were filled with awe and praised God for giving such power to human beings.

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*«Stand up! Take your stretcher and go home»*

Fr. Francesc NICOLAU i Pous  
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we find one of the many evangelic manifestations evidencing the merciful goodness of the Lord. They all show many aspects, rich in details. Jesus' compassion, mercifully exerted, goes from resurrecting the dead or healing a leper to forgive a public woman sinner and going through the healing of many ailments and acceptance of repented sinners. The latter can also be found in parables, as the lost sheep, the lost drachma or the prodigal son.

Today's Gospel is another instance of the Saviour's mercy, in two different aspects at the same time: the illness of the body and the sickness of the soul. And, the soul being more important Jesus starts with it. He knows the sick man has repented of his faults, He sees his faith and that of those bringing him, and says: «Courage, my son! Your sins are forgiven» (Mt 9:2).

**Why does He start like this without his having been asked to do so? He is, of course, aware of what the paralytic is thinking and He knows this is what he will appreciate the most, for when facing the sanctity of Jesus, the paralytic might feel confused and ashamed of his own faults and scared that they may hamper his healing. So the Lord wants to calm him first. Jesus does not care whether some teachers of the law murmur in their hearts. Not only, but a part of his message is to prove He has come to show his mercy towards sinners, and He now proclaims it.**

**And so, it happens that, while those blinded by their pride, think of themselves as if they were the only just ones and cannot accept Jesus' claim, those that sincerely consider themselves as sinners, do take Him in. It is towards those God condescends to forgive them. As St. Augustine says: «Great misery is a proud man, but a humble God's mercy is even greater». And, in this case, the divine mercy goes even further: as an additional complement of his forgiveness He heals the paralytic too: «Stand up! Take your stretcher and go home» (Mt 9:6). Jesus wants the sinner's joy to be complete.**

**We must reaffirm our confidence in him. But, we should remember we are also sinners, so let us not close ourselves to his Grace.**