

## 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Today's Gospel tells us how the Lord, meeting friends who had brought His paralyzed companion, healed him by saying, "Get up and go." He seemed to resurrect him and give him new life. It is obvious that this man was as if dead, could not do anything for himself, but was completely dependent on his friends and relatives.

We do not know what the paralyzed man was thinking or what his hopes and dreams were, but the faith of his friends impressed the Savior. What would happen if the paralyzed man did not get up? Under the laughter of the scribes and Pharisees, they would drag the sick man to the roof and, disgraced by their own naivete, carry him home through the whole city. Afterwards, they would have to repair the roof and repay the owners for the damage. And if you think that would be the end of it, then you have never lived in a small town and underestimate the power of human memory. For the four people who ventured into the feat of faith, not only was the health of a friend at stake, but also their personal reputation and the respect of society.

In "Experiencing Peace: With God You Can Live Beyond Fear," Margaret Feinberg tells the story of a talented French tightrope walker who performed incredible stunts. He walked on a tightrope at a considerable height with his eyes closed and pushed a wheelbarrow in front of him.

When people heard about this talented tightrope walker in America, a promoter offered him a contract to tightrope across Niagara Falls from the Canadian side to the United States' side for a considerable reward. The promoter wrote a letter to the Frenchman in which he expressed doubts about his talent, but offered to prove his abilities. The tightrope walker accepted the offer. On the day of his crossing, thousands of people came to watch the event. The tightrope walker passed over the waterfall with his wheelbarrow.

On the shores of the United States, he approached the promoter and asked if he believed it was possible to go over Niagara Falls. "Of course," replied the promoter, "because we just saw it." "No. Do you really believe I can do this?" The tightrope walker insisted. The promoter had to say, "Yes, I do." "Then get in the car and go back to Canada." The promoter never got into the wheelbarrow, because talking about faith is one thing, and risking your life is quite another.

True faith is not in words but in deeds. Notice Christ's words: "Seeing their faith..." The people who brought their paralyzed companion believed so much that they were willing to break into someone else's house in order to reach the Savior.

In the first practice, the new coach of the Wingate High School basketball team in Brooklyn, New York, gave each player a ball. "For starters, let each of you practice throwing the ball into the net from where you normally are during the game." One of the guys went to the bench and tried to throw it to the basket. He was the twelfth substitute and had never been on the court in his career. He had no desire to train because he did not believe that he would ever play.

It is easy to condemn this young man, but let everyone look at themselves. Many of the Christians present here consider themselves to be similar backup players in church life. I came to church, stayed for two hours and went home. The church calls for an active religious life, but some Christians are in no hurry to take the initiative. As a result, thousands of believers have become remote observers of church life, instead of being participants and builders.

God is looking for people who are dissatisfied with sitting on the bench. Those who not only believe in God, but also believe that God will give them enough strength and wisdom to be active in God's field.

God is looking for people who will say in faith, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). As Abraham said, he was, "...fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised" (Rom. 4:21). As the apostle Paul, who believed that God, "Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). God is looking for people of sincere faith - just like the four friends we heard about in today's Gospel reading.

Dear believers! The story of Jesus' healing of the paralyzed man opens before us a great field of spiritual work on himself. May every shortcoming be an opportunity for us to meet Jesus, to draw closer to Him in prayer and the Holy Mysteries. There He is waiting for us to comfort, heal, and fill our lives with peace.