

St. Louis Catholic Church

Tuesday of the 4th Week of Lent

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12

John 5:1-3a, 5-16

Again the Old Testament passage paints a picture of how God will eventually restore this world to its original state of paradise. Water, so prominent in Ezekiel's prophecy, symbolizes the abundance of blessings, especially life itself, that God will pour out upon His elect. Water quenches our thirst, cleanses us and refreshes us on a hot day.

People in the day of Christ were moved by the curative powers of water as they approached the pool of Bethesda. They remembered that water was a symbol of blessing and in sickness they needed all the blessings they could get.

Jesus sees the crowd and took pity on a man crippled for 38 years. This man clung to a hope that the waters could restore him to health. Without recourse to any aid Jesus says "Stand up! Pick up your mat and walk!" Later Christ finds the man and tells him to sin no more, you are well. Sin no more so that nothing worse may happen to you.

What could be worse than paralyzed for 38 years? Jesus is reminding us that sin can paralyze us for eternity. When we sin we are not complete, whole or in the state of grace. Being healthy, powerful, rich, strong or successful is only for a while. The grace and presence of God when we are walking in "the light", is eternal.

Christ cares for the whole person--body and soul. Physically and spiritually. We should take care of ourselves in this world. Live healthy, eat healthy (I'm told to watch fat and sugar on labels) and exercise. Modern medicine is wonderful and advancement in medical science can keep us healthy longer than in days past. Regular physical exams are encouraged.

So too should we spiritually be medicated. The Bible, the sacraments, spiritual direction, examinations of conscience, confession, adoration, retreats, spiritual reading and imitation of saints are all good preventative medicines. Our soul is eternal.

Lent reminds us that water cleansed us of sin in baptism. Sin gets us dirty and dry and empty again. As a thirsty person needs water to quench our parched throats, so does the flowing water of God's grace satisfy us in this world. We only live for a brief time in the temporal, mortal shell called a body.

Christ took our nature and gave it a hope filled existence. When baptized we share in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Confession is a 2nd baptism where we can go into the tomb or font of the confessional--be ritually washed of our personal sins and be raised and reborn to a new life.

When Christ rose, He was in a glorified body and not easily recognized. He had to point to His wounded hands and side. They thought He was a ghost. St. Paul says we will be given a new body patterned after the glorified Body of Jesus. Yes, like the cripple we will be healed. Now in these days, let's listen to Jesus. Sin no more so nothing worse may happen to you. We are made

for God. We are incomplete until we are with God. Body and Soul united and whole. Take care of the frail body to the best of our ability. Trust that sickness, aging, pain handicapped bodies are to be transformed to bodies that cannot suffer. Pray and trust in God's healing today. Sometimes He's trying to heal when another person encourages to take better care of ourselves. Take care more importantly in preparing your eternal soul for the encounter with the Lord. How do we live and love in the body?

God Bless,
Msgr. John McArthur

Key Events This Week:

1. Confessions Tuesday and Thursday from 5:00-6:00 p.m.
2. Night of Reflection--Mass 6:00 p.m.--Pot Luck--Reflection--Read Mark 10 for preparation
3. Stations of the Cross--Friday Evening--5:30 p.m.