

Mark 2:1-12

1 When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. **2** So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door, and he was speaking the word to them. **3** Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. **4** And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. **5** When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven." **6** Now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, **7** "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" **8** At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves, and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? **9** Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'? **10** But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— **11** "I say to you, stand up, take your mat, and go to your home." **12** And he stood up and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Listening to People of Hope

Sr Wendy, Sisters of St Andrew

The gospel we heard speaks of a paralyzed man. We know that he was lying on a mat, but we have no other information about him. That man could be you; he could be me. He could even represent the whole world. For our world is not healthy. There is suffering and divisions. We want peace, but we are confronted with the reality of war. Children are supposed to play, to grow up in a secure environment, but many see their life destroyed. Faced with these situations, we could easily become that paralyzed man. We feel powerless, unable to move, without energy, without hope.

After having looked at the paralyzed man, let us now look at Jesus. He preaches the Word and attracts crowds by his healings. But in this text we discover that Jesus is more than a preacher or a healer. "When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Child, your sins are forgiven'" (v. 5). Jesus wants everyone to know that "the Son of Man has authority on

earth to forgive sins” (v. 10). We should not overlook this extraordinary news, because it means that nothing is lost. Jesus is our Hope. He comes into our lives and into our world to save us, to liberate us from sin. The problem of sin is a problem in the relationship between ourselves and God. This relationship can be paralyzed or broken. But there is a solution to this problem. The solution is Jesus. He has the power to reconcile us with God. He can make us walk again. Thanks to him, we can repair our broken relationship with God, with Life.

Let us now look at the four persons who carry the paralyzed man to Jesus. These four “carriers” are for me people of hope. They form a beautiful image of what Christians can be in the midst of a suffering world.

1. They saw the paralyzed man and listened to him. They did not close their eyes to his suffering,
2. They cooperated. They may have been different in many ways but two things united them—their love for that man and their faith in Jesus’s words.
3. Jesus saw the faith of the four carriers (v. 5). And yet throughout the story they do not say one word. We see their faith through their actions. A living faith causes them to act. They try to repair the suffering and the injustice they see in the world. But all they can do is to bring this suffering to Jesus. Once they have arrived there, Jesus is the one who does the work.
4. For our four carriers, coming to Jesus was not easy. They encountered obstacles. They needed courage, perseverance and creativity. Sometimes, to reach Jesus it is necessary to make a hole in a roof.... They did not say, “Look at what we have done!” They did not expect a reward. They were humble servants whose desire was to make the world better for everyone. In the midst of a world that suffers, they are like stars in the dark of night.

This does not mean that we must always be “carriers” and be strong. It is just as important to accept that we need others who carry us, who pray for us, who hope for us. No one is a Christian all alone.

Questions for a Sharing

- x *What can “paralyze” me, make me incapable of acting and living fully? What persons around me show courage, perseverance and creativity in their desire to entrust to Jesus what they are carrying?*
- x *Have I already had the experience of being carried by others when I was unable to go forward by myself? How? Have I already been able to carry someone else? How? What does it mean to “carry someone,” to “carry someone to Jesus?”*
- x *What is the relationship between “sin” and being “paralyzed”?*