

Reflection Monday 2nd Week Advent 2022

For Jesus, being reconciled with God is far, far more important than any miracle he performed. The miracles were his way of showing us what reconciliation with God really meant. In healing the paralysed man, Jesus shows us that God's forgiveness sets us free from the shackling chains of sin. Elsewhere he will show that, for some, it is like being raised to life, a life of joy, hope and goodness, and freed from a death that prevents us from doing any good.

What impressed Jesus in the gospel was the faith of the people who brought the paralysed man to him. A whole community of friends made it possible for the man to be brought to Jesus. As always Jesus responds to faith not only by forgiving sin but by physical healing. This encourages us when we join with others to pray for healing. Those needing healing bring us together in prayer which is why we call it holy communion. Even in the cases where those we pray for are not healed; we will know that their sins will have been forgiven.

A thought for Advent

Pope John Paul II said that the traditional "Christmas tree" is a very ancient custom which exalts the value of life, as in winter the evergreen becomes a sign of undying life. In general, the tree is decorated and Christmas gifts are placed under it. The symbol is also eloquent from a typically Christian point of view: It reminds us of the "tree of life" (Gen 2:9), a representation of Christ, God's supreme gift to humanity.

The message of the Christmas tree, therefore, is that life is "ever green" if one gives: not so much material things, but of oneself: in friendship and sincere affection, and in fraternal help and forgiveness, in shared time and reciprocal listening.

A primary school teacher asked her pupils for what they were most truly thankful at Christmas time.

One child put up her hand and said: *"I'm really thankful that I am not a turkey!!"*