

## Thursday, Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time

*Matthew 9:1-8*

*'Seeing their faith Jesus said to the paralytic, 'Courage, my child'.*

### REFLECTION

In the gospel reading today, a paralysed man is carried to Jesus by the help of his friends. He was completely dependent on others to bring him where he wanted to go. When it was heard that Jesus had arrived in the town, he must have expressed some desire to be brought to Jesus. Clearly this man was not alone in his paralysis because people quickly gathered around him to carry him to Jesus. What happens here is a reflection of what we are all called to as church. In many a different ways we are called to bring each other to Jesus. It also means that we never make our way to the Lord on our own. The journey to the Lord is always a shared journey. We need other people around us for both our physical wellbeing as well as for our spiritual wellbeing. It is fascinating that when the paralytic reached Jesus, the gospel reading says that Jesus saw their faith – which means, the faith of those who carried the paralytic – he then said to the paralytic, *'Courage, my child, your sins are forgiven'*. Only then did Jesus heal him of his paralysis. It was the faith of his friends that opened the paralytic up to the healing presence of Jesus. Doesn't this not mean that we have much to receive from other believers on the journey of our life, just as we have much to give?

Today's gospel reading invites us to give thanks to God for all those who have brought us to the Lord in some way. Think of our teachers, priests, religious sisters or brothers, friends. For most of us it isn't our parents who were first to bring us to the Lord when they presented us for baptism. It was the faith of our parents that carried us to the church. We begin our lives as Christians carried by the faith of others. Even in the course of our lives, we still need the faith of others to keep our own relationship with the Lord alive. Thus we are always

very much dependent on each other when it comes to our relationship with the Lord. As we grow in faith towards the Lord, we also help others to grow as well. If we grow away from the Lord, we are also making it more difficult for others to grow towards him. In a very profound sense, we depend on each other's faith on the pilgrimage of life that we share. In that sense our own relationship with the Lord, or lack of it, while very personal is never purely private; it always impacts on others in some way or the other.