

Feast of St. Athanasius, Bishop.

Readings of the mass – **Acts 9:31-42, Psalm 115(116):12-17, John 6:60-69**

“How can I repay the Lord for his goodness to me?” Actually, we cannot repay him, there is nothing that we can give that he does not already own. The psalmist went on to say, “the cup of salvation I will raise”, this cup of salvation is the blood of Jesus which we receive in the Holy mass was poured out for us and for the whole world. By our own efforts alone, we cannot please God and we are like the saints, in constant need of God’s help.

Maybe in our visible surroundings the paralytics are not being healed, so I would say it takes a deeper faith to open our eyes to the ‘miracles’ that do happen – the little things that we tend to take for granted. The point of the miracles is never itself and it is there to take us further into faith as Jesus said, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe” (Jn 4:48). “and they were all converted to the Lord”, perhaps we can also take away this from our first reading today – our constant need of conversion, however the Lord intends to do this.

Actually, Jesus understands that it is hard for us to believe and He always gives us the freedom of choice. When he spoke about the Eucharist as we read in the Gospel today many found it very difficult, and only the twelve were left! It requires a strong faith to believe His words, “this is my body”. St. Peter answered Jesus, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life” (Jn 6:68). The apostles begin to deepen their belief that Jesus’ body is food for eternal life and that His words are words of eternal life. What a great miracle and mystery it is that the Lord who made the universe comes to us hidden in the form of a tiny host. “Hidden God, devoutly I adore Thee, truly present underneath these veils: all my heart subdues itself before Thee, since it all before Thee faints and fails”, as St. Thomas Aquinas put it in his famous [hymn Adoro Te Devote](#).

On a personal note, it was on the feast day of St. Athanasius two years ago that I managed to receive a clear sign that God was calling me to discern the priesthood further within a seminary.